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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. *Parliament*

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

## SECOND SESSION, 1917-18-19.

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# SEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

SECOND SESSION.

## Governor-General.

His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir RONALD CRAUFURD MUNRO FERGUSON, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

## Australian National War Government.

(From 17th February, 1917, to 8th January, 1918.)

Prime Minister and Attorney-General	...	The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C.
Minister for the Navy	...	The Right Honorable Joseph Cook, P.C.
Treasurer	...	The Right Honorable Sir John Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G.
Minister for Defence	...	The Honorable George Foster Pearce.
Vice-President of the Executive Council	...	The Honorable Edward Davis Millen.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom (16th November, 1917).
Minister for Repatriation	...	The Honorable Edward Davis Millen (from 28th September, 1917.)
Minister for Works and Railways	...	The Honorable William Alexander Watt.
Minister for Home and Territories	...	The Honorable Patrick McMahon Glynn, K.C.
Minister for Trade and Customs	...	The Honorable Jens August Jensen.
Postmaster-General	...	The Honorable William Webster.
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom.
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable Edward John Russell.

## Australian National War Government.

(From 10th January, 1918.)

Prime Minister and Attorney-General	...	The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C.
Minister for the Navy	...	The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G.
Treasurer	...	The Right Honorable Lord Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Minister for Defence	...	The Honorable William Alexander Watt (27th March, 1918)
Minister for Repatriation	...	The Honorable George Foster Pearce.
Minister for Works and Railways	...	The Honorable Edward Davis Millen.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom (27th March, 1918).
Minister for Home and Territories	...	The Honorable Patrick McMahon Glynn, K.C.
Minister for Trade and Customs	...	The Honorable Jens August Jensen †
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable William Alexander Watt (18th December, 1918).
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Postmaster-General	...	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene (17th January, 1919).
Vice-President of the Executive Council	...	The Honorable William Webster.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
		The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom.
		<i>Succeeded by</i>
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable Edward John Russell (27th March, 1918).
		The Honorable Edward John Russell.
		(Appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council, 27th March, 1918).
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable Alexander Poynton.*
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable George Henry Wise.*
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene. (Appointed Minister for Trade and Customs, 17th January, 1919.)*
Honorary Minister	...	The Honorable Richard Beaumont Orchard.**

\*Appointed 26th March, 1918. —†Removed from office, 18th December, 1918 —\*\*Resigned from office, 31st January, 1919.

## Senators.

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Chairman of Committees—Senator John Wallace Shannon.

<sup>1</sup> Bakhap, Thomas Jerome Kingston (T.)	Lynch, Hon. Patrick Joseph (W.A.)
Barker, Stephen (V.)	Maughan, William John Ryott (Q.)
Barnes, John (V.)	<sup>1</sup> McDougall, Allan (N.S.W.)
Bolton, Lieut.-Col. William Kinsey (V.)	Millen, Hon. Edward Davis (N.S.W.)
Buzacott, Richard (W.A.)	†Mulcahy, Hon. Edward (T.)
Crawford, Thomas William (Q.)	Needham, Edward (W.A.)
De Largie, Hon. Hugh (W.A.)	<sup>1</sup> Newland, John (S.A.)
Earle, Hon. John (T.)	O'Keefe, Hon. David John (T.)
Fairbairn, George (V.)	O'Loghlin, Lieut.-Col. Hon. James Vincent,
Ferriks, Myles Aloysius (Q.)	V.D. (S.A.)
Foll, Hattil Spencer (Q.)	Pearce, Hon. George Foster (W.A.)
Gardiner, Hon. Albert (N.S.W.)	Plain, William (V.)
Givens, Hon. Thomas (Q.)	Pratten, Herbert Edward (N.S.W.)
Grant, John (N.S.W.)	Reid, Matthew (Q.)
Guthrie, Robert Storrie (S.A.)	Rowell, Col. James, C.B. (S.A.)
Guy, James (T.)	Russell, Hon. Edward John (V.)
Henderson, George (W.A.)	Senior, William (S.A.)
Keating, Hon. John Henry (T.)	Shannon, John Wallace (S.A.)
* <sup>1</sup> Long, Hon. James Joseph (T.)	Thomas, Hon. Josiah (N.S.W.)

<sup>1</sup> Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 12th July, 1917. —\* Resignation reported, 20th December, 1918.

† Appointed by State Parliament, 15th January, 1919.



I am now able to furnish the honorable member with the following information:—

1. One side of the promenade deck was reserved for officers and sergeants; the other three sides of the promenade deck, the main and boat decks, and the forward and aft well decks were available for the remainder of the troops.

2. The *Miltiades* is not a hospital ship, but a hospital carrier, the difference being that the latter only carries men who require very little medical treatment. The system of carrying troops does not provide cabins for privates.

3. No.

*Sitting suspended from 12.4 a.m. to 12.18 a.m. (Saturday).*

### DEFENCE BILL (No. 3).

Message received from the Senate intimating that it had agreed to the amendments of the House of Representatives in the Bill.

House adjourned at 12.20 a.m. (Saturday).

## Senate.

*Wednesday, 25 June, 1919.*

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### NEW SENATOR.

The PRESIDENT.—With reference to the vacancy in the representation of the State of Tasmania in the Senate occasioned by the resignation of Senator the Hon. J. J. Long, which I reported to the Senate on 20th December last, I have received from His Excellency the Governor-General a certificate of the election of the Hon. Edward Mulcahy as a senator to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation.

The CLERK then read the correspondence as follows:—

Commonwealth of Australia,  
Governor-General's Office,  
21st January, 1919.

Memorandum for

The Honorable

The President of the Senate.

The Governor-General forwards herewith to the Honorable the President of the Senate a despatch received from His Excellency the

16 K

Governor of Tasmania, dated 15th January, 1919, on the subject of the appointment of the Honorable Edward Mulcahy to hold the vacancy created in the Senate by the resignation of Mr. J. J. Long.

R. M. FERGUSON,  
Governor-General.

[COPY.]

Government House,  
Hobart, Tasmania,  
15th January, 1919.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith two copies of the proceedings which took place at Parliament House, Hobart, to-day, in connexion with the appointment of a senator for the State of Tasmania, *vice* Senator James Joseph Long, resigned.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

F. A. NEWDEGATE,  
Governor.

His Excellency the Governor-General.  
Federal Government House, Melbourne.

[COPY.]

Legislative Council,  
Hobart, 15th January, 1919.

His Excellency the Governor.

Your Excellency,—In reply to your Excellency's message, addressed to both Houses of Parliament, transmitting copy of a notification from the President of the Senate of the Commonwealth Parliament that a vacancy had arisen in the Senate through the resignation of Senator James Joseph Long, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly met together in the House of Assembly Chamber this day and sitting and voting together chose

*Hon. Edward Mulcahy*  
to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the said resignation.

I have the honour to be,  
Your Excellency's obedient servant,  
(Sgd.) TETLEY GRANT,  
President.

### ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of the following message from the Governor-General, intimating that His Majesty the King had graciously received the address agreed to by the Senate on the 12th November last (*vide* page 7643).

Commonwealth of Australia,  
Governor-General.

The Honorable the President of the Senate.

The Governor-General forwards herewith, for the information of the honorable members



of the Senate, copy of a despatch received from the Secretary of State for the Colonies intimating that the address agreed to by the Senate has been very graciously received by His Majesty.

R. M. FERGUSON,  
Governor-General.

Federal Government House,  
Melbourne, 24th March, 1919.

Commonwealth of Australia.  
No. 32.

Downing-street,  
23rd January, 1919.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's despatch No. 400 of the 15th November, 1918, forwarding addresses presented to you for submission to His Majesty the King by the Senate and the House of Representatives respectively, together with a copy of your reply.

2. His Majesty's reply to the address as telegraphed was conveyed to you by my predecessor's telegram of the 15th November. The addresses themselves have now been laid before the King, who was pleased to receive them very graciously.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

MILNER.

Governor-General His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir R. Munro Ferguson, G.C.M.G., &c., &c.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills reported:—

Iron and Steel Bounty Bill.  
Conciliation and Arbitration Bill (No. 2).  
Income Tax Bill (No. 2).  
War-time Profits Tax Assessment Bill (No. 2).  
Chief Justice's Pension Bill.  
War Precautions Bill.  
Appropriation Bill 1918-1919.  
War Service (Homes) Bill.  
Deceased Soldiers Estates Bill.  
Naval Defence Bill.  
Public Service Bill (No. 3).  
Defence Bill (No. 3).

## REPLIES TO ADDRESSES OF CONDOLENCE.

The PRESIDENT announced that since the last meeting of the Senate he had received replies from Mr. Douglas H. Reid, Lady Forrest, and Mrs. J. C. Manifold, to addresses of condolence on the occasion of the death of Sir George Reid, of Lord Forrest, and of Mr. J. C. Manifold, respectively.

## COMMONWEALTH BANK.

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a copy of the aggregate balance-sheet of the Commonwealth Bank to 31st December, 1918, together with the Auditor-General's report thereon.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Senator MILLEN (New South Wales—Minister for Repatriation) [3.7].—(*By leave.*)—

Upon the re-assembling of Parliament, I desire on behalf of the Government to make an announcement as to the business of the session and other important matters.

1. Until the protracted deliberations of the Peace Conference were approaching finality, it was considered inadvisable to summon the Houses for the discussion of public business. Even now the information at the disposal of the Government as to the terms of peace is not sufficient to warrant the submission of the matter to Parliament, and it appears probable that it will have to await the return of the Australian representatives.

Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook are expected to leave Britain this week, and, as soon as practicable after they reach Melbourne, the Peace Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations will be presented for the consideration of honorable members. The Government appreciates the momentous importance of the decisions of the Conference, which, in addition to far-reaching territorial, racial, and economic determinations, involve such vital questions to this young nation as disarmament, indemnities, and the destination of the former German Colonies in the Western Pacific.

At the request of the Imperial Government, Executive authority was conferred upon the Australian Ministers to sign the Treaty on behalf of the Commonwealth, but the adoption or otherwise will be dependent on the will of Parliament.

The Government feels that the powerful and sustained efforts of the Prime Minister for the preservation of Australia's interests entitle him to the unqualified approbation of the people and Parliament.



2. It will be noted with pleasure that the demobilization and return of our armies is now proceeding, notwithstanding the inherent difficulties, swiftly and satisfactorily.

Up to 31st May, 1919, approximately 169,000 members of the Australian Imperial Force had returned to Australia; 3,300 had been discharged at their own request overseas, 18,000 were *en route* to Australia, leaving about 79,000 still to be repatriated. If the present shipping provision is maintained, all our troops, except the Depôt and Head-quarters Staffs, will have embarked for Australia by the end of next month.

The success which is attending this great task amply confirms the steps taken by the Government in placing the work in the hands of a responsible Minister in London.

We record with gratitude and pleasure the return of the Australian Navy to its home station after its splendid services overseas.

3. With no lessons to be drawn from experience, either here or abroad, the Department of Repatriation has been established.

To the end of last month 94,036 applicants presented 177,478 applications for assistance under all headings; 150,350 were granted, 42,470 men were placed in employment, and 7,513 allotted to vocational training, of which number 2,466 have completed their courses and been placed in employment.

Extra facilities now being provided will enable up to 15,000 additional men to be thus trained.

Notwithstanding the serious effects of the influenza epidemic and the strike upon employment, the number on the books of the Department awaiting employment is only 6,810 (inclusive of 2,500 men who have been thrown back on the Department by the influenza epidemic and the strike), being 3.86 per cent. of the total number discharged.

The total expenditure involved in direct assistance to returned men and their dependants is £1,023,939.

The powers of local repatriation committees have recently been greatly ex-

tended, and it is anticipated that this decentralization will insure the treatment of applications with a minimum of delay.

With a view to making more ample provision for returned soldiers desiring to settle upon the land, the Government recently undertook to advance to the States the money necessary to make available the requisite number of holdings, and for railways and other works necessary to their successful occupation. It further agreed to provide an advance up to £625 per settler. The total liability of the Commonwealth in respect of land settlement is estimated at between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000.

The "spade work" in connexion with the housing scheme for returned soldiers, which was authorized by Parliament in December last, has been heavy and surrounded by many difficulties. The initial stages are complete, and the operations of the Department are now being entered upon. It is intended to extend the provisions of the housing scheme to munition and other workers who undertook war service abroad under contract.

The Government has given careful consideration to the question of employment of returned soldiers and sailors in the Public Service, and has, in their interests, modified to a considerable extent the conditions of employment, both temporary and permanent.

Although much general repatriation work yet remains, and experience is continually pointing to fresh activities and new methods, it may fairly be said that the repatriation machinery is running smoothly, and the system, considering its magnitude, has already achieved gratifying results.

4. The influenza epidemic in our midst has caused regrettable loss of life and widespread distress.

Although quarantine is in the hands of the Commonwealth, important health powers still reside with the States.

When an outbreak of this disease appeared probable, the Government, with a keen desire to unite all the administrative forces of Australia in its attack, entered into an agreement with the States which



provided for complete concert and co-operation.

This agreement was abrogated by several State Governments, who, in defiance of constitutional rights, imposed their own quarantine measures on land and sea traffic.

The result was a lamentable disorganization of the shipping services, occasioning serious shortages of food supplies and fuel in many parts of the Commonwealth, and grave delays in the debarkation of our returning soldiers.

The futility of such methods was, however, gradually recognised by most of the States, and nearly all the local regulations have since been withdrawn.

5. The Government has prepared and forwarded, for the consideration of the Governments of Britain and the Dominions, a scheme providing for the administration, conversion, and extinction of the war debts of the Empire.

6. A large number of the fleet of steamers which are owned in Australia is still under Imperial requisition, but their release is expected within a few months. The vessels remaining in Australian waters are requisitioned under powers conferred under the War Precautions Act. As a result of the governmental control of Inter-State shipping, Australia has, during the war, enjoyed more favorable freights and fares than any other belligerent country. The urgent question of maintaining, after the present control expires, the cheap coastal services in the face of the tempting rates earned by tonnage in other waters, is at present engaging the attention of the Government.

During the past year the shipbuilding policy of the Commonwealth has been energetically pursued. Two steel vessels have been launched in Australia, ten more are under construction, and contracts have been entered into for another ten.

The contracts for wooden ships in Australia have, for the most part, been cancelled. It is the intention of the Government, when opportunity offers, to dispose of similar ships built on the Pacific coast of America.

*Senator Millen.*

The policy of the Government is to continue the Commonwealth line of steamers, and to build larger and faster vessels for our oversea trade, so that the producers of our exportable primary products shall be assured satisfactory shipping facilities at reasonable rates. Negotiations in this direction are at present in progress.

7. As indicated to Parliament in December last, Admiral Viscount Jellicoe is at present visiting Australia to consider and advise upon our future naval requirements. It is expected that his report will be received during the month of August. The Government is grateful to the Lords of the Admiralty and the British Cabinet for making available the services of so eminent an authority as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet of Britain.

8. In pursuance of a promise given to Parliament that the expenditure of the Commonwealth would be carefully reviewed during the recess, a Royal Commission was appointed to report on the whole field of Commonwealth expenditure. The Commission's first progress report, which is now in preparation, will, it is hoped, be of material assistance in effecting reductions of expenditure in the Public Departments.

9. It has been found impossible to dispose of the unsold portions of our wheat upon anything like reasonable conditions. Shortage of tonnage has intensified the difficulties, so that, in addition to 870,000 tons which are still held for the Imperial Government and other buyers, the Australian Board has on hand stocks of over 2,000,000 tons, carrying an overdraft of £18,800,000.

Representatives of the wheat-growers now sit on the Australian Board, and have publicly expressed approval of the efforts made on behalf of the producer.

In furtherance of its policy of assisting our primary producers, the Government has placed before the dairy farmers of Australia a scheme for the better organization of their industry and the standardization of their products. If, after full consultation with those concerned, a workable scheme acceptable to the great body of dairy farmers is



evolved, the organization of producers in other lines of primary production will be considered.

10. The abrupt cessation of hostilities, and the vast accumulations of metals which are no longer required for warlike purposes, have exercised a paralyzing effect upon the metal markets of the world. It is feared that no substantial improvement is possible until those accumulations have been absorbed in peaceful arts and manufactures.

Vigorous efforts have been made by the Prime Minister to make sales of lead, copper, and tin with the Imperial Government, but, so far, without success. Negotiations are still proceeding. The zinc position is more fortunate, as the contract is for a period of ten years after the war. In the hope of maintaining the output of the copper mines and smelting works, the Government arranged to make advances to producing companies in respect of copper produced up to 31st March last.

It is the intention of the Government to make proposals to the Governments of the States which are calculated to relieve materially the stagnation arising out of the unfortunate stoppage of production.

The reduced demand for rare metals has induced the Imperial Government to terminate many of its contracts, and, at present, proposals to cancel certain short-dated agreements are the subject of correspondence between the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments.

11. Notwithstanding the elaborate legislation and machinery designed by the Commonwealth and the States to prevent or settle industrial disputes, Australia is even at this critical time faced by grave domestic troubles of this character.

The seamen, who obtained increased wages and improved conditions under an award by the Commonwealth Court in January last, have struck, and thrown idle practically the whole of the Inter-State shipping. The Government intervened with the object of averting the disorganization of the industry, but the seamen declined the mediation of the Court. The Government has, in order to conserve light and power for essential needs, im-

posed restrictions on the consumption of fuel.

The seamen's strike is already causing much unemployment in dependent industries, but as the attitude of the union constitutes a challenge to the authority and laws of this Parliament, the Government can offer no concessions. Unless wiser counsels prevail amongst those responsible, grave suffering to innocent industrialists and to the community must supervene.

12. With the exception of the control of a few commodities respecting which contracts exist with the British Government, or financial obligations have been incurred by the Commonwealth, the Government has withdrawn the orders made under the price-fixing regulations and has wound up the organization of the Prices Commissioners.

It was considered advisable to gradually release these restrictions, and thus allow trade and commerce to adapt itself to normal conditions, rather than continue this form of control to the date when our powers would automatically come to an abrupt termination.

As the Commonwealth has not, in time of peace, the constitutional authority to deal with price-fixing, the exercise of such powers must now revert to the States.

There is indubitable evidence that during the abnormal conditions created by the war the operation of the Price-fixing Department has saved the consumer many millions sterling, and has prevented those tragic increases in the prices of goods which have been registered in every other country engaged in the great conflict.

13. In the spirit of the promise made to Parliament, the Government has repealed a considerable number of other regulations made under the War Precautions Act, and has removed or relaxed many restrictions operated under the Defence Acts, including censorship.

14. Some months ago, having ascertained that the coal industry was in an unsettled and critical condition, and that the stocks of coal in many parts of the



Commonwealth were dangerously low, the Government called the employers and employees together in conference. After full consideration, it was decided, in order to prevent a serious dislocation of industry, to authorize an increase of wages as agreed upon by the employers and employees, and a corresponding increase in the selling price of coal and coke.

15. The programme for the session will embrace the following:—

A Supply Bill covering the first two months of the new financial year, which will be the first measure tabled.

Bills for the supersession of the War Precautions Act, as indicated during the debate on the extension Bill last year. These will provide protection in relation to wheat, wool, dairy produce, and some other commodities which have been specially dealt with during the period of the war. Other matters of importance arising out of our war activities or experience will also be submitted.

The Peace Treaty and its attendant covenants.

A Tariff Bill, designed, firstly, to insure the preservation of those manufacturing enterprises inaugurated during the war, which are already being subjected to fierce competition; secondly, the encouragement of new undertakings which are basic, and upon which our national safety depends; thirdly, the extension and diversification of existing industries; and generally the development of Australian production and manufacture.

A measure to facilitate and expedite the decision in industrial disputes, and improve the methods of the operation of the Arbitration Acts.

Financial measures dealing with loans and taxation and the relations between the Commonwealth and the States.

*Senator Millen.*

Legislation dealing with naturalized subjects and aliens, with a view to the better safeguarding of national interests.

Amendments of the existing law providing for a closer inspection and control of immigrants, which the experience of the war has rendered necessary.

A Bill in relation to the method of voting at elections for the Senate.

A Bill to amend the Inter-State Commission Act.

The Bill to establish the Institute of Science and Industry, which has already passed the Senate.

A measure to establish the Bureau of Commerce and Industry.

A Bill to amend the Navigation Act, which must ere long be proclaimed. This amendment is necessary to bring the present Statute into line with more advanced legislation.

Several other measures, including Bills dealing with Customs, Defence, Lighthouses, Posts and Telegraphs, Estate Duty Assessment, Land Tax Assessment, Aviation, Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta Railway Lands, Quarantine, Lands Acquisition, Trade Marks, Shipbuilding and Shipping, and other matters.

This programme promises an arduous session, and the Government invites honorable members to co-operate in the consideration and passage of measures having for their object the welfare of the people of Australia. I beg to lay the statement on the table of the Senate, and move—

That the paper be printed.

Debate (on motion by Senator GARDINER) adjourned.

## PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Agricultural and Fisheries Board.—Wages and Conditions of Employment in Agriculture—

Vol. I.—General Report.

Vol. II.—Reports of Investigations.



**Agricultural Wages Board.**—Report of Committee appointed to inquire into financial results of occupation of agricultural land, &c.

**Arbitration (Public Service) Act 1911**—

Awards of Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, and other documents, in connexion with complaints submitted by—

Australian Commonwealth Public Service Clerical Association (Award dated 14th March, 1919).

Federated Public Service Assistants' Association of Australia (Award dated 31st March, 1919).

Meat Inspectors' Association—Commonwealth Public Service (Award dated 27th March, 1919).

**Orders of Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitrations**, and other documents, in connexion with variations of awards in the following cases:—

Australian Commonwealth Post and Telegraph Association (dated 16th December, 1918).

Australian Commonwealth Post and Telegraph Officers' Association (dated 18th December, 1918)—(2 cases).

Australian Commonwealth Public Service Clerical Association (dated 16th December, 1918).

Australian Commonwealth Public Service Clerical Association (dated 18th December, 1918).

Australian Letter Carriers' Association (dated 16th December, 1918)—(2 cases).

Australian Letter Carriers' Association (dated 18th December, 1918)—(2 cases).

Australian Telegraph and Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union (dated 3rd March, 1919).

Commonwealth General Division Telephone Officers' Association (dated 16th December, 1918).

Commonwealth General Division Telephone Officers' Association (dated 18th December, 1918).

Commonwealth General Division Telephone Officers' Association (dated 6th March, 1919).

Commonwealth Legal Professional Officers' Association (dated 6th March, 1919).

Federated Public Service Assistants' Association of Australia (dated 16th December, 1918)—(2 cases).

Federated Public Service Assistants' Association of Australia (dated 18th December, 1918)—(2 cases).

General Division Officers' Union of the Trade and Customs Department of Australia (dated 16th December, 1918).

General Division Officers' Union of the Trade and Customs Department of Australia (dated 18th December, 1918).

General Division Officers' Union of the Trade and Customs Department of Australia (dated 6th March, 1919).

Postal Sorters' Union of Australia (dated 16th December, 1918).

**Audit Act 1901-1917**—

Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 47, 52, 60.

Transfers of amounts approved by the Governor-General in Council.—Financial year 1918-19—

Dated 26th March, 1919.

Dated 30th April, 1919.

Dated 28th May, 1919.

Dated 6th June, 1919.

**Australia.**—Report on Trade for year 1917 by H.M. Trade Commissioner in the Commonwealth.

**Bolshevism in Russia.**—Collection of Reports.

**Coal Industry Commission.**—Interim Reports (2) by certain Members, and Report by certain other Members. (3 papers.)

**Commerce (Trade Descriptions) Act 1905.**—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 11, 88.

**Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act 1906-1915**—Regulations.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 57.

**Commonwealth Government Small Arms Factory.**—Report for year ended 30th June, 1918.

**Commonwealth Railways Act 1917**—

By-law No. 9.

By-law No. 10.

**Contract Immigrants Act 1905.**—Return for 1918, respecting Contract Immigrants admitted or refused admission into the Commonwealth, &c.

**Criminal Law Amendment Bill and Sexual Offences Bill.**—Report, &c., from Joint Select Committee of House of Lords and House of Commons.

**Customs Act 1901-1916**—

Proclamations Prohibiting Exportation (except under certain conditions) of—  
Cheese containing Margarine or other foreign fatty substance.

Condensed Milk.

Goods per Parcels Post.

Russian Rouble Notes.

Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 41, 86, 87, 137, 138.

**Death and Invalidity in the Commonwealth.** Committee concerning Causes.—Report on Diphtheria.

**Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act 1918.**—Regulations.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 67.



Defence Act 1903-1918. — Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1918, Nos. 319, 320, 321, 322, 333, 334; 1919, Nos. 6, 10, 13, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26, 33, 38, 39, 42, 48, 49, 50, 54, 61, 64, 65, 66, 72, 73, 74, 91, 92, 95, 104, 105, 111, 114, 121, 122, 126, 127.

Demobilization and Resettlement.—Regulations made by Military Service (Civil Liabilities) Committee.

Dye Industry.—Memorandum by Board of Trade *re* State Assistance.

Emigration Bill 1918.—Correspondence.

Entertainments Tax Assessment Act 1916.—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1918, No. 299; 1919, No. 51—No. 68.

Excise Act 1901-1918. — Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 118. Gold Production Committee.—Report.

Immigration Act 1901-1912.—Return for 1918, showing (a) Persons refused admission to the Commonwealth; (b) Persons who passed the dictation test; (c) Persons admitted without being asked to pass the dictation test; (d) Departures of coloured persons from the Commonwealth.

Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18.—Report.

Lands Acquisition Act 1906-1916.—Land acquired at—

Currie, King Island, Tasmania—For Postal purposes.

Fairy Meadow, New South Wales—For Federal Capital and other purposes.

Five Dock, Sydney, New South Wales—For Repatriation purposes.

Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, Queensland—For Repatriation purposes.

Launceston, Tasmania—For Defence purposes.

Lithgow, New South Wales—For Defence purposes (3 cases).

North Sydney, New South Wales—For Defence purposes.

North Sydney, New South Wales—For Repatriation purposes.

Port Augusta, South Australia—For Railway purposes (2 cases).

Port Pirie, South Australia—For Defence purposes.

Port Pirie, South Australia—For Customs purposes.

Redfern, New South Wales—For Repatriation purposes.

Rosemount, Queensland—For Defence purposes.

Westernport, Victoria—For Defence purposes.

Ministry of Reconstruction—

Advisory Bodies—Statement *re* Appointment.

Building Industry after the War—Report of Committee.

Civil War Workers Committee—2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Interim Reports.

Education in the Army—Second Interim Report of Adult Education Committee.

Electric Power Supply—Report of Committee of Chairmen.

Employers and Employed, Relations between—Final Report of Committee.

Engineering Trades (New Industries)—Report of Committee.

Machinery of Government Committee—Report.

Rent Increase and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Acts—Report of Committee.

Work of the Ministry—Report for period ended 31st December, 1918.

Naturalization Act 1903-1917.—Return of Persons to whom Naturalization Certificates were granted during 1918.

Naval Defence Act 1910-1912.—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 18, 19, 58, 62, 63, 110, 135.

Northern Territory.—Ordinances—1918, No. 13—Real Property.

1919—

No. 1.—Interpretation.

No. 2.—Bush Fires.

No. 3.—Jury.

No. 4.—Bank Holidays.

No. 5.—Workmen's Dwellings.

Northern Territory.—Report of Administrator for year ended 30th June, 1918.

Papua.—Ordinances—

1918—

No. 11.—Native Taxes.

No. 13.—Health (Venereal Diseases).

1919—

No. 1.—Native Plantations.

Patents Act 1903-1909. — Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 14, No. 30.

Post and Telegraph Act 1901-1916.—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1918, Nos. 327, 330, 335; 1919, Nos. 22, 37, 56, 124, 131, 132, 133, 136, 146.

Public Service Act 1902-1918.—Appointments, Promotions, &c.—

Prime Minister's Department—

V. R. Driscoll.

J. Fennessy.

H. C. Hine and D. E. Aikins.

G. J. Hogben.

M. O. Matthes.

W. Y. O'Driscoll, A. Perry, and T. J. Webster.

G. H. Waite.

Department of the Treasury—

T. S. Harrison.

S. McK. White.

S. McK. White and M. T. Keely.

G. E. R. McCarthy.

Attorney-General's Department—

J. M. Ramsay.

K. C. Waugh.

Department of Defence—

A. J. Harney and A. Crisp.

Postmaster-General's Department—

W. Carrick.

H. W. Conolly.

A. W. B. Fawcett.

R. H. Henniker.



Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1918, No. 312; 1919, Nos., 17, 25, 27, 40, 59, 93, 94, 99, 109, 120.

Seamen's Compensation Act 1911.—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 139.

Spirits Act 1906-1918.—Regulations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 69.

Territory for the Seat of Government.—Ordinances of 1919—

No. 2.—Timber Protection.

No. 3.—Fish Protection.

No. 4.—Cotter River.

#### The War—

Austro-Hungarian Government—Note addressed to Governments of all Bel-ligerent States.

Cost of Living—Increase since June, 1914, and counter-balancing factors arising under War conditions.—Report of Committee.

Emergency Legislation passed by Par-liaments of the Empire—Summary.

Emergency Legislation—First and Second Reports from Select Committee.

#### Germany—

Conditions of Armistice signed 11th November, 1918.

Convention prolonging Armistice.

Economic Conditions prevailing, De-cember, 1918, to March, 1919—Reports by British Officers.

Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey —Terms of Armistices.

German Colonies—Correspondence relat-ing to wishes of Natives as to their future Government.

Imperial War Conference, 1918.—Ex-tracts from Minutes of Proceedings, and Papers laid before the Conference.

Insurance—Preliminary Statement of Results of Government War Insurance Schemes.

National Expenditure—Select Commit-tee—

Memorandum on Sixth Report.

Ninth Report, with Appendix.

Tenth Report.

National Relief Fund.—Report on Ad-ministration, up to 30th September, 1918.

Peace Treaty between Germany and Fin-land, together with Commercial and Shipping Agreement.

#### Prisoners of War—

Combatant prisoners of war and civilians. — Agreement between British and German Governments.

Employment in Coal and Salt Mines of British prisoners in Germany—Report.

Treatment of British prisoners in Turkey—Report.

Treatment by Germans of prisoners taken during Spring Offensives of 1918—Report.

Treatment by Germans of prisoners taken during Spring Offensives of 1918—Further Report.

#### Shipping—

British Hospital Ships *Rewa*, *Glen-art Castle*, *Guildford Castle*, and *Llandovery Castle*—Torpedoing by German Submarines—Circular De-spach to His Majesty's Diplomatic Representatives in Allied and Neutral Countries.

Merchant Tonnage and the Sub-marine—Supplementary Statement showing, for period August, 1914, to October, 1918—(1) Merchant Tonnage losses by Enemy Action and Marine Risk; (2) Merchant Shipbuilding Output; (3) Enemy Vessels captured and brought into Service; together with Diagrams.

Women—Employment in the United Kingdom during the War—Report of Board of Trade.

War Precautions Act 1914-1916.—Regu-lations amended.—Statutory Rules 1918, Nos. 326, 331, 332; 1919, Nos. 4, 5, 8, 29, 34, 36, 46, 53, 70, 71, 112, 116, 128, 131.

Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905-1915.—Regu-lations amended.—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 134.

Wool: British Government's Purchase of Australian Wool Clip, Balance of Season 1916-17.—Appraisalment and Disposition Statement; Statement of Wool scoured on account of Imperial Government; State-ment of Wool scoured on account of Russian Government; Statement of Wool reclassified and/or repacked on account of Imperial Government; and Contraries and Oddments Statement.

Report by Surgeon-General R. H. Fetherston, Director-General, A.A.M.S., on (1) Aus-tralian Army Medical Services Overseas; (2) The Medical Service of Great Britain and the Allies; and (3) Re-education and Re-establishment of War Cripples in America, Europe, and India.—February-November.

#### DEATH OF RETURNED SOLDIER.

Senator KEATING.—I ask the Min-ister for Repatriation (Senator Millen) if his attention has been drawn to a report of the death of a returned soldier who was found drowned in Hobart, and, if so, will inquiries be made into the matter? According to the evidence in the papers, it appeared that the deceased soldier had recently applied for vocational training, and had been refused by the Repatriation Board. In the course of the inquiry, some caustic comments were made by the coroner.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Order! The honorable senator must not make statements when asking a question.



Senator KEATING.—I am merely repeating the statements in the report to which I am drawing the Minister's attention. I ask him if he will instruct that inquiries be made.

Senator MILLEN.—I noticed the paragraph, also the caustic comments of the coroner, and I immediately telegraphed to Hobart for information. The report supplied to me was to the effect that the unfortunate man had applied for vocational training, and had been informed that he would get it. His case was merely pending the formal decision by the Board, when his unfortunate death took place. In view of these facts I take this opportunity of suggesting that even important individuals like coroners should learn the facts before they indulge in the luxury of caustic comment.

### PRIVILEGE.

#### CONTINUOUS SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.

Senator PRATTEN (New South Wales) [3.29].—I desire, as a matter of privilege, to draw attention to the position which, it appears to me, is created by the continuous session of Parliament. This question is probably a *quasi* legal one, and certainly somewhat constitutional. The business-paper before us leads us to assume that our meeting to-day is a continuation of the second session of this Parliament, which has lasted now for about two years. As this matter affects the rights and privileges of the members of the Senate through the Standing Orders which have been framed in accordance with the Constitution, I hope you, sir, will bear with me if I go back to the circumstances under which it was adopted. The draft Constitution was submitted to the people for their approval, and there was then published an annotation made by Mr. (now Sir Robert) Garrahan in connexion with the particular clause that bears upon the position. The draft Constitution that was placed before the people stated, in Part I., section 6, that "there shall be a session of the Parliament once at least in every year, so that twelve months shall not intervene between the last sitting of the Parliament in one session and its first

sitting in the next session." The annotation to this was that "there must be at least one session a year." It did not say that there shall be continuing sessions, or a half session, but there must be one session a year. It seems clear that the intention of the provision in the Constitution was, firstly, that, should exceptional circumstances arise, Parliament might not be prorogued indefinitely; and, secondly, that no single session should be longer than a year, or else as near to that period as could reasonably be arranged.

In going back through the history of Federation, I find that the first session of the first Parliament occupied about seventeen months. The second session occupied only five months; but the beginning of that session was well within twelve months of the first. In the second Parliament, the first session occupied nine months, and the second session six months, while the third occupied approximately four months. In the third Parliament, the first session occupied one day; but well within twelve months of that the second session commenced, and occupied eleven months. The third session commenced on the 16th September, 1908, and closed within three months of that date. There was a fourth session in the third Parliament, so that, so far as those Parliaments are concerned, twelve months did not elapse between one session and the next. In the fourth Parliament, circumstances were somewhat similar. The first session occupied five months; the second, three months; and the third session, six months. But, again, twelve months did not elapse between one session and another. In the fifth Parliament we had two sessions in practically one year; but when the war occurred the then Government—of which an honorable senator opposite was a member—brought about what was, to my mind, an extraordinary state of affairs. When the war started we had no longer one session a year, and in the last Parliament, from 1914 onwards, we had a long continuation of the one session. The same thing has appertained to this session of the present Parliament.

Having shown the exact position of the Parliaments since the inception of



Federation, I desire now to draw your attention, Mr. President, to the Standing Orders which bear upon the present situation. But for the Standing Orders under which our debates are carried on it would not matter very much whether the Parliament had been prorogued and a new session started, or whether, as is actually the case, the Houses were adjourned and we were continuing to-day the second session of this Parliament, which has already lasted nearly two years. Standing order No. 133 reads—

No Question or Amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any Question or Amendment which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative, unless the Order, Resolution, or Vote on such Question or Amendment has been rescinded.

Under that standing order, it appears to me that if we go on as we are doing, practically making the whole of our parliamentary term one session, the effect will be that honorable senators will be debarred from referring, for instance, to the subject of repatriation, in connexion with which Senator Bolton moved the adjournment of the Senate last year. I shall be prevented under that standing order from referring, for example, to the metal question; and other honorable senators will be similarly debarred.

Senator MILLEN.—If that is the effect of that standing order, namely, that it might interfere with the honorable senator's rights and privileges, does he not think it would serve those of other honorable senators?

Senator PRATTEN.—I am not speaking in a personal manner, but am endeavouring to draw the attention of the Senate to what may occur within the next six or nine months. The Minister has just read a long list of legislative subjects which the Government have notified that they intend to place before this Parliament; and I can conceive of a good many matters arising out of that proposed legislation wherein it will be reasonable and fair and proper for honorable senators to make reference to debates that have occurred in the previous years of

this Parliament. I call attention now to standing order 413—

No Senator shall allude to any Debate of the same Session upon a Question or Bill not being then under discussion, nor to any speech made in Committee, except by the indulgence of the Senate for personal explanations.

If the strict letter of that standing order were kept, in its connexion with the continuation of the second session of this Parliament on which we are now entering, no honorable senator would be able to refer, for example, to the debate which took place in this Chamber last year on the War Precautions Act. No honorable senator would be able to refer to debates in connexion with defence administration; nor would any honorable senator be able to refer to the debate on the War-time Profits Tax Act which took place nearly two years ago. Standing order No. 414 bears also upon this matter—

No Senator shall read extracts from newspapers or other Documents, except *Hansard*, referring to Debates in the Senate during the same Session.

Standing order No. 416 also bears upon the subject of sessions, and is as follows:—

No Senator shall allude to any Debate of the current Session in the House of Representatives, or to any Measure impending therein.

In other words, the strict interpretation of this standing order in connexion with the procedure now being adopted so far as sessions are concerned, would prevent any honorable senator from referring to the debate upon the *Budget* which occurred in the House of Representatives nearly two years ago. No honorable senator could refer, either, to matters which arose in another place in connexion with the Shaw wireless operations. It seems clear, therefore, that if this present meeting of the Parliament, and our sittings for months onwards are to be regarded as a continuation of the session, and if you, sir, strictly enforce the Standing Orders, the rights and privileges of honorable senators will be most seriously interfered with; and, according to the strict rules of debate under our Standing Orders, we shall not be able to refer to many matters—



Senator MILLEN.—Who interfered? The honorable senator states that our rights and privileges will be interfered with. Who interfered with them?

Senator PRATTEN.—I am drawing attention to a position which may arise in connexion with our future work in this Parliament, and under the Constitution I question very much whether the Government can constitutionally call this a continuation of the second session, seeing that we have been going on for two years. If they can do that, the Standing Orders must be amended to preserve the rights and privileges of honorable senators. It seems to me that the Standing Orders were clearly made on the understanding that there would be a session of Parliament in every year. If you, Mr. President, hold that this is a continuation of the second session, and an honorable senator refers to debates in another place or to matters dealt with in this Chamber even two years ago, another honorable senator, by raising a point of order, may question his right to do so under the Standing Orders, and you must rule against the honorable senator being permitted to make such references. I draw attention to the position which has arisen out of the course which has been taken. I am not blaming the Government. This procedure was followed by the Government of the Parliament of 1914 as well as by the Government of the Parliament of 1917. But peace was signed yesterday, and whatever reasons there may have been for the departure from precedent, and, in my opinion, from constitutionality, I think that honorable senators should now refuse to agree to any arrangement by which their rights and privileges might be curtailed. I feel sure that in dealing with the legislation which this Chamber will be called upon to deal with during the current session, honorable senators will, in spite of the procedure which has been adopted, insist upon the freedom of debate which is their right and privilege.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I may be allowed to explain, on the point of privilege raised by Senator Pratten, that whatever complaint the

Senate may have in the matter—and I recognise that certain disabilities are imposed on members of both Houses of this Parliament because of the procedure adopted—it is not the Government that is responsible, but it is Parliament itself. The Senate is responsible for the procedure adopted in this chamber. As a war-time precaution, the Senate assented to this practice of its own motion, and I remind Senator Pratten that he was himself a consenting party to the adoption of this practice, and that if the privileges of honorable senators have been interfered with he has been one of the guilty interferers himself. The honorable senator asks if the Government are justified in regarding this meeting as a continuation of the session of Parliament. It does not matter whether the Government are entitled to so regard it or not, the fact remains that it is a continuation of the session, because the last motion passed in this Chamber was that the Senate at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed. The date fixed was to-day, and the Senate meets to-day in continuation of its last sittings. I should like to congratulate Senator Pratten upon the study which he has evidently given to the Standing Orders during the recess. The practice of continuing a session from the beginning of the Parliament until its close was assented to purely as a war measure, and now that the war is happily over, I trust that it will disappear. I should like to remind Senator Pratten that some of the disabilities which he has enumerated, such as inability to refer to debates in another place, have always existed. If this were a new session, and honorable senators had been called together to-day by proclamation of the Governor-General, that disability would still exist. Honorable senators find methods by which they may allude to debates in another place, but it is not my business to point out what those methods are.

Senator KEATING (Tasmania) [3.46].—We all recognise that the continuance of the session of one year into the next has necessarily involved certain limitations of the privileges of honorable senators in debate. But as you, sir, have



pointed out, the continuation of the session from one year into another has been the conscious and deliberate act of the Parliament itself. On each occasion, instead of going away after a prorogation, the Houses have assented to a motion for an adjournment to a date to be fixed.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Order! I find that before the matter can be discussed it is necessary, under the Standing Orders, that an honorable senator bringing forward a matter of privilege should conclude with a motion. I must, therefore, ask Senator Pratten to submit a motion.

Senator PRATTEN (New South Wales) [3.48].—I move—

That the matter complained of, and the interference thereby with the privileges of honorable senators, be referred for the consideration of the Standing Orders Committee.

Senator KEATING (Tasmania) [3.49].—I was about to suggest that we should not allow the discussion to terminate without referring this matter to the Standing Orders Committee. I have always regarded the provision in the Constitution to which reference has been made as designed to prevent a Government keeping Parliament from meeting for a period of twelve months. It does not necessarily mean that every year there shall be a separate session. The object of the provision is to prevent a Government from carrying on for twelve months without meeting Parliament. The section reads—

There shall be a session of the Parliament once at least in every twelve months, so that twelve months shall not intervene between the last sitting of the Parliament in one session and its first sitting in the next session.

That was passed to prevent government without Parliament. With regard to the matter of privilege, I shall refer only to standing order 447, which reads—

Except so far as is expressly provided, these Standing Orders shall in no way restrict the mode in which the Senate may exercise and uphold its powers, privileges, and immunities.

The spirit of that standing order is that our Standing Orders are intended to serve the purposes of the Senate, and that the Senate is not to be a slave to the Standing Orders. Seeing that we have

adopted this new principle, at any rate for the period of the war, and there may on some other occasion be an extension of a session from one calendar year into another, it is very desirable that the Standing Orders Committee should consider what Standing Orders, if any, are required to meet a state of things which was clearly not in contemplation when the Standing Orders were originally framed.

Senator MILLEN (New South Wales—Minister for Repatriation) [3.51].—I do not at all object to this matter being referred to the special Committee constituted to deal with such questions, but it is somewhat anomalous that exception should be taken to the continuation into this year of the session commencing last year on the ground that it interferes with the rights and privileges of honorable senators. The action taken to continue the session was taken to conserve those rights and privileges. Honorable senators were informed at the time that the reason for the course taken was that, in view of the position when the armistice was signed, everything being extremely vague and nebulous, it would interfere with the rights and privileges of honorable senators if there were occasion to call Parliament together on an emergency arising. In order to give the Government an opportunity of consulting with honorable senators should the necessity arise suddenly, and to give honorable senators an opportunity to attend in their places, this course was adopted.

Senator KEATING.—The honorable senator means the course of adjournment instead of prorogation?

Senator MILLEN.—Yes.

Senator KEATING.—It was eminently desirable that that course should be adopted.

Senator MILLEN.—It was done to preserve the rights and privileges of honorable senators. If I did not know the versatility of Senator Pratten, I should be more surprised at his action than I am, but it has appeared a little strange to me that he should attack the course which has been followed, and to which



he subscribed, on the ground that it interfered with the rights and privileges of honorable senators, when, as a matter of fact, it was to preserve those rights that we agreed to adjourn rather than to be prorogued.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### CLOSING OF MOUNT MORGAN COPPER MINE.

Senator FOLL.—I ask the Leader of the Senate whether he has any information to give, or can make available any of the correspondence which has passed between myself and the Acting Prime Minister, and also between the Queensland Government and the Acting Prime Minister, on the matter of the closing down of the Mount Morgan Copper mine in Central Queensland?

Senator MILLEN.—I have no knowledge of the correspondence, and necessarily none of its contents. If the honorable senator will ask his question to-morrow, I shall make inquiries in the meantime.

### SIGNING OF PEACE.

Senator MAUGHAN.—I ask the Leader of the Senate whether it is a fact, as reported in the *Herald* of this afternoon, that peace has not been signed?

Senator MILLEN.—I have no other information than that which reached the Prime Minister yesterday, and was given to the public. It was to the effect that peace had been signed. As possibly some misunderstanding may arise from this reply, I may state that when I began to speak I was not aware of the nature of the report which is apparently in circulation. When I stated that peace had been signed, I think I should have said that the message received by the Government was to the effect that the Germans had agreed to sign the Peace Treaty—not that the signatures had actually been attached to it.

### MEETING OF PARLIAMENT AT FEDERAL CAPITAL.

Senator GARDINER.—I ask the Minister for Repatriation (Senator Millen)

whether he will place before the Cabinet the desirableness of marking the advent of peace after the great war in which we have been engaged, by this Parliament meeting at the Federal Capital next session?

Senator MILLEN.—In view of the time that would be occupied in erecting the necessary buildings, I fear that the matter brought forward by Senator Pratten this afternoon would assume an even more serious aspect if any attempt were made to give effect to the honorable senator's suggestion. The requisite buildings could not be erected within twelve months.

### ADJOURNMENT (Formal).

#### DETENTION OF PAUL FREEMAN.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I have received from Senator Grant an intimation that he desires to move the adjournment of the Senate in order to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance, namely, "The detention in custody of Paul Freeman without a trial."

Senator GRANT (New South Wales) [4.0].—I move—

That the Senate at its rising adjourn until 2 p.m. to-morrow.

*Four honorable senators having risen in their places in support of the motion,*

Senator GRANT.—Probably there is no question which has caused so much agitation, not only in New South Wales, but throughout Australia, as the treatment which has been meted out to Paul Freeman by the military authorities in Australia. It appears from the reports which have been made public, that this workman was suddenly arrested, that no charge was laid against him, and that he was summarily placed on board an out-going vessel. He was refused permission to land in America, and was subsequently returned to Australia. He was deported a second time, and was again returned to Australia. This treatment seems to me to constitute an outrage, which ought not to be passed over without the severest condemnation. Efforts have been made to secure a trial for this man, but without avail. On the 2nd instant, after we had



considered the matter at some length, the following wire, signed by myself, Mr. Mahony, and Mr. West, was despatched to the Acting Prime Minister:—

Meeting of Federal and State members urge you to take immediate action with a view to prevent the death of Paul Freeman. Urge immediate removal to hospital.

At this time Paul Freeman was confined on board the *Sonoma*. He had determined that rather than leave Australia for the third time, he would adopt what is known as a hunger strike. On the 5th instant, the following reply was received from the Acting Prime Minister:—

*Re* telegram from yourself and Messrs. Mahony and West, of 2nd; arrangements made for Paul Freeman to be disembarked from *Sonoma* and placed under detention, pending institution of inquiries with a view to definitely establishing nationality.

Prior to this action being taken, very grave disturbances were narrowly averted in Sydney. It is a most serious matter for any Government, no matter how powerful they may be, to arrest any man, to place him in custody, and to propose to deport him without laying any charge whatever against him, and without giving him to understand why he is being dealt with in this summary fashion. I repeat that the peace of the city of Sydney was very nearly disturbed in quite a drastic manner by the action of the Government. Later on, after Freeman had been removed to the Victoria Barracks Hospital, the following wire, signed by me and Messrs. Brookfield and Blakeley, was despatched to the Acting Prime Minister:—

We have interviewed Paul Freeman to-day. He has started on another hunger strike, and his condition is very low. Freeman fears deportation without trial. Will you release Freeman on bail and allow us to put him in a private hospital? We are prepared to go bail.

Some time after that—I think it was on the 11th June—the following telegram was received from the Acting Prime Minister:—

Your telegram *re* Freeman to hand. I have sent it on for consideration to the Acting Minister for Defence and on receipt of his advice will communicate with you.

An effort was made to get into communication with the Acting Minister for Defence (Senator Russell) by telephone,

but it was not too successful, and on the 10th inst. the honorable gentleman wired—

Reference your telephone message *re* Paul Freeman suggest your request be put in writing or forwarded by telegram.

The following wire, signed by myself, Mr. Brookfield, and Mr. Blakeley, was then sent to Senator Russell:—

Will you release Freeman on bail and allow us to put him in a private hospital? We are prepared to go bail.

Then, on the 13th inst., Senator Russell, who appears to have taken at least two days to consider the matter, despatched the following wire:—

Pending result of inquiries from United States authorities as to reasons for refusing Freeman admission to America, Cabinet has decided that he shall be detained in custody.

As most senators are probably aware, Paul Freeman is a miner by occupation, and, as the result of certain information supplied to us, the following telegram was sent by Mr. Blakeley to Mr. Theodore, Acting Premier of Queensland:—

Paul Freeman Committee elected by Annual Labour Conference have instructed me to approach you with view to protect Freeman's interests claims Cloncurry district.

I am informed by Mr. Blakeley that a reply has been received from Mr. Theodore, to the effect that he has taken the necessary steps to protect Paul Freeman's interests. This case has assumed a degree of importance entirely apart from Freeman himself. So far as I can gather, Freeman is an ordinary workman, who follows the avocation of a miner. He is a man who is not very much inclined to work for an employer. As soon as he gets a few pounds together he strikes out on his own. That type of man, I submit, is an exceedingly valuable asset to Australia. The individual who is prepared to strike out on his own, to go into the bush and make a living for himself apart from any employer, commands my very warmest approval. We find that Freeman, after working for certain employers for some time, decided to strike out for himself. He went westward from Cloncurry approximately 80 miles, to somewhere near the source of the Leichhardt River. He took with him a few horses, some sets of harness, certain



necessary implements, some food, and some mining tools. Altogether he estimates that these were worth, approximately, £500. Having commenced prospecting operations, he discovered one claim, which he christened "The Four Slaves." He then went further along to another spot, where he thought the prospects were good, and this he designated "Just a Chance." Still further along he pegged out another small claim called "The International." None of those claims, so far as I can gather, was of very much account, but later on Freeman discovered ore in such quantity that he christened this new claim "Freedom." When he was arrested suddenly one evening, by means of two policemen, a blacktracker, and some dogs, he was making from this mine at least £3 per day. Apparently he was then very far removed from any habitation, so if he were inclined to make any remarks at all, there would be nobody to hear him. So far as I know, he made no remarks of any kind, nor was his behaviour such as to justify the Department in attempting to deport him, at least without a trial. If the Department had any information against the man, it is surprising to me, and certainly it was unfair to Paul Freeman that he was not faced with his accusers. He was suddenly arrested at 11 o'clock at night. He was ordered to come out of his tent, but he declined to do so, and instead, he invited the policemen inside. They entered the tent, and I understand Paul Freeman quietly submitted to arrest, and was suddenly removed from that locality. He had only a limited time to give instructions with regard to his horses and other property, and I believe he has heard nothing about them from that day to this. He had also at grass about £100 worth of copper ore, and does not know what has become of that either. To my mind, such treatment would not be fair to any man, and certainly it is very unfair to a man prepared, as Freeman was, to strike out on his own account and actively engage in a useful occupation. We have been told repeatedly, not only by this Government, but by all the Governments of Australia, that what is required in Australia is more production.

*Senator Grant.*

This is a statement which we hear from almost every public speaker, and which is reproduced almost daily in the press of Australia. Owing, no doubt, to the agitation that took place, the Government did not attempt to deport Freeman a third time, so he is now confined in what is termed a hospital in the Victoria Barracks, Sydney. I visited him on several occasions, sometimes alone, and sometimes in the company of others. When first I saw him he was certainly in a very low condition, because he had then commenced a further hunger strike; but believing there was a possibility of a trial, he agreed, prior to my departure on the occasion of my second visit, to take some liquid refreshment. I have seen him since then, and he appears to be gradually being restored to normal health, though he is a long way off that yet. The hospital ward in which he is confined has very much the aspect of a prison, there being bars to the windows, bolts to the doors, and all the necessary adjuncts of a gaol, including, of course, the sentry marching up and down. His room faces the south, so no sunshine can enter, and altogether it is much different from rooms in other portions of the hospital building. It appears to me that this man is not receiving fair treatment. If the Government have anything against him, why are they apparently afraid to grant him a trial? So far as I can learn, he has been at least ten years in Australia, and, according to his own statement, he has never been in the hands of the authorities before. I contend that, like every other citizen of Australia, he was entitled, when arrested, to have an opportunity of confronting his accusers, and to have a free trial. That is all he wants, and anything less will not be justice. Of late years a considerable number of men have been arrested and placed in gaol without trial, while others have likewise been deported. I do not know their history. I do not profess to know the history of Paul Freeman. I am speaking only upon information supplied to me; but, so far as I know, there is nothing against him. He invites a free trial, so that he may be faced by his accusers, and he is satisfied that if this is granted to him, he will get justice. Ac-



according to the cabled information, Peace is about to be signed, and in view of the fact that, so far as we know, there is no definite charge against Freeman, we are doing him, and probably many others, a very great injustice by keeping them in custody. I have, therefore, moved the formal motion of adjournment so as to bring this matter prominently before the people, and in order that Freeman may have a free and open trial.

Senator RUSSELL (Victoria—Acting Minister for Defence) [4.19].—The story told by Senator Grant would be an interesting one if it were altogether correct. Immediately information reached me concerning Paul Freeman I ordered a full and complete inquiry, with the result that it was definitely ascertained that he was not permitted to land at San Francisco by the United States Government. Then, recognising that it was useless to send him back until we had settled the question of his nationality, I ordered that he be removed to a military hospital in Sydney. The Government ordered his deportation in 1918. He had stated that he was a native of Mount Vernon, in the United States of America, and, therefore, the Government attempted to deport him to the country which he claimed was the land of his birth, but the American Government refused him admission on the ground that his citizenship had not been established. I have offered every opportunity to Paul Freeman to establish that he is an American, and not an enemy citizen. He has been unwilling to do that. It has been stated, also, that he has never been in the hands of the authorities before; but the inquiry instituted by the Government proved the fact that he was before the Court in Cloncurry, in June, 1918, and, apparently, had been under observation for some time.

Senator GARDINER.—What was he before the Cloncurry Court for?

Senator RUSSELL.—He was charged under 9V. I take it, that that was for non-registration as an alien, and that he was not complying with the laws of the country.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Had he been naturalized?

Senator RUSSELL.—No. He was registered as an alien under the War Precautions Act. The opinion of the Government is that Paul Freeman is not an American citizen, but a German subject, and that he registered as an American for the purpose of avoiding internment. I do not wish to make any statement to the injury of any individual. I merely make this statement in defence of the action that has been taken.

Senator GARDINER.—But I think we ought to know his history.

Senator RUSSELL.—I am obliged, as a Minister of the Crown, to administer the laws passed by this Parliament, and I find that an order made in 1915 reads—

(1) The Minister may order the deportation of any alien and any alien with respect to whom such an order is made shall forthwith leave and thereafter remain out of the Commonwealth.

(2) Where an alien is ordered to be deported under this order, he may, until he can, in the opinion of the competent Naval or Military authority, be conveniently conveyed to and placed on board a ship about to leave the Commonwealth, and whilst being conveyed to the ship, and whilst on board the ship, until the ship finally leaves the Commonwealth, be detained in such manner as the competent Naval or Military authority directs, and, whilst so detained, shall be deemed to be in legal custody.

In 1915 Parliament deliberately created the Cabinet a jury to determine questions of alien citizenship. I take it that Parliament thought it wise to do this for the preservation of this country during the war, and in order that men suspected of enemy sympathies could be kept under observation or deported. The Cabinet are still of the opinion that Freeman must be deported; but we are willing to make any and every inquiry, and will assist anybody to help Freeman to clearly establish who he is and what he is.

Senator GARDINER.—Will you give us the reason for his deportation?

Senator RUSSELL.—I do not propose to go into all that this afternoon. That is not my particular function. I point out again, that the jury, in Freeman's case, was the Government of Australia.



Senator Lt.-Colonel O'LOGHLIN.—Has he had an opportunity of meeting his accusers?

Senator MILLEN.—Did honorable senators opposite grant a trial to the men they locked up?

Senator RUSSELL.—Parliament invested the Cabinet with the authority of a jury with regard to these cases during the period of the war, and we are now trying to ascertain Paul Freeman's citizenship. If honorable senators, or Paul Freeman himself, will co-operate, every opportunity will be given to establish his claim to American citizenship. I only want to say, in conclusion, that Paul Freeman was treated in a perfectly humane manner. If he did not have the services of a military doctor in the early stages of his confinement, it was because the ship's doctor did not desire it. Freeman was never at any time in danger of dying of starvation, because he was well provided with concentrated food and raisins. According to the latest report in the hands of the Government, he is now doing well. We are treating him in a humane manner. He has made a statement which has been furnished in a brief report, the effect of which is that for three years Freeman was a member of the American Army.

Senator Lt.-Colonel O'LOGHLIN.—Did not the ship's doctor protest against his treatment?

Senator RUSSELL.—Not to me. Naturally, the ship and its doctor would be glad to get rid of a man whom that vessel had carried twice across the ocean in such circumstances.

Senator MILLEN.—Nobody seems to want him. America does not want him. We do not want him. The ship's doctor did not seem to want him.

Senator RUSSELL.—That is the position. We are now in touch with the United States Government, which is trying to establish the man's citizenship. When that has been established Cabinet will again deal with the matter.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [4.27].—I am exceedingly sorry that the Minister has seen fit to withhold from the Senate information to which we

are entitled. We desire to know when the case of Paul Freeman came before Cabinet, and what are the grounds for his deportation. No member of this Parliament who participated in the enactment of the War Precautions Act and its regulations would have dreamed that under that Statute such an outrage upon individual liberty could be perpetrated as we have witnessed in the arrest and deportation of Paul Freeman. I have never seen the man, but if the Government are going to do this thing outside of the law—and I am saying this just as I stated it before a large public meeting the other day—if the Government will brush the law on one side and appeal to force, then we shall meet them at their own game. Let the Government realize that this is what they are stirring up. We are now living in a time of peace; and surely, such being the case, the Courts of this country can deal with any man against whom there is either a charge or the suspicion of an offence. In the present instance the Minister informs us that Cabinet acted as a jury, and sentenced Freeman to deportation. This is a Parliament of free men representing free men, and if the Government essay to deliberately brush aside all the safeguards of our laws, then we shall teach them that they cannot do such things.

Senator GUTHRIE.—But you agreed to that particular regulation.

Senator GARDINER.—I did nothing of the kind, in so far as it furnishes power to do such a thing as this; and I challenge those who shelter themselves behind the War Precautions regulations, which were intended to safeguard this country during a time of war, and not to force men out of the country merely because they had a good copper find—

Senator MILLEN.—The honorable senator himself locked men up, and without any trial.

Senator GARDINER.—That was done during a time of war, and in similar circumstances we would do the same thing again. We did not intern any man without the fullest inquiry and the most careful consideration of the possibility of danger to this community. I might add



that there were few other than enemy subjects interned during my connexion with the Administration. But is it to be thought of that the Government should withhold from the public in these altogether different circumstances the grounds for their action, and the information upon which they based their arrest of Paul Freeman? I do not know the date on which the Government dealt with the man. I have asked for it. The fact that he was "brought up" in June, 1918, on the ground that he had not registered as an alien may indicate that it was after the war had ended—that is to say, after the armistice—that he was arrested. Will any man pretend that an individual who is away out in the interior of Australia, toiling as a working miner, can be regarded as a menace to the safety of this country?

Senator O'KEEFE.—He may have had an aeroplane.

Senator GUTHRIE.—No, but he might have had a penny-halfpenny stamp.

Senator GARDINER.—One's mind can conjure up all manner of dangers if the man had had his liberty. The Government may know of something, but when the matter is raised in Parliament, in the interests of the whole community, the people are entitled to be informed whether or not there was anything serious against the individual in question. The public will not permit a Government to ride rough-shod over our country's laws, and to send a man out of Australia without any knowledge of his having committed an offence. The Government say they constituted a jury, and that it was upon their finding that Freeman was sentenced to deportation. It is, I think, a little over 700 years since the signing of Magna Charta.

Senator MILLEN.—It is only four years since you passed the law that has been read.

Senator GARDINER.—Yes; but it was passed for common-sense men, not for a lot of idiots to administer; and I warn the Government that if they appeal to force and apply force they will get it back. I warn them to make no mistake about that. At the

meeting to which I have already referred I mildly suggested to that body of citizens in Sydney that if the Government would not properly administer the law we should hang one Cabinet Minister a week until the Government came to their senses. When a Government, sworn to administer the laws of the country, are seen to be trampling them under their feet—trampling upon something which should be sacred, namely, the right of an individual who has been charged with an offence to have a full, free, and open trial—then trouble must inevitably follow. During the war certain people were interned in the interests of the safety of the community. That was an eminently wise and proper course; but will any man now say that, the war being over, the safety of the community must be protected by deporting a particular individual? The only reason which the Government can give for taking a miner away from his mine appears to be that the Cabinet themselves are the jury. The Cabinet evidently had certain information which justified them in sending that American back to America; and it seems that they are going to send him back once more, as soon as they are satisfied that America is his place of birth. All this is not happening in war time, nor is it for the protection of Australia from spies and dangerous men generally. It is because the Government have picked this man out for purposes which the Minister has not seen fit to make known. If Paul Freeman were the greatest criminal who had set foot in Australia, that would furnish all the more reason why he should be given an open trial. We are a free people who believe that the vilest criminal should be put upon his trial before being condemned. Take such criminals as Deeming and Butler. Those men committed crimes in Australia and made for America, whereupon the whole force of the law was put into operation to bring them back and give them a fair and open trial. But here we see a grand jury of Cabinet Ministers secretly sentencing a man to deportation, with the additional spectacle of the country to which he has been deported refusing



to receive him, whereupon he is compelled to be rocked to and fro on the ocean until the shipping company involved takes notice of the situation and gets the capitalistic press to move the Government of Australia to take the man off the ship. No man on suspicion alone should have been deported from this country at such a time as this, when the war is virtually over. Australia has been built up by men of all nationalities.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Unfortunately.

Senator GARDINER.—I say, for Australia, fortunately. In the State of South Australia, even the subjects of our late enemy in chief accomplished very creditable pioneering work, and in Queensland it has been the same. But Paul Freeman is not an enemy subject. Obviously the Cabinet believed that, in that they sent him to America, the country of his birth—to America, one of our Allies—

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—He said he was an American.

Senator GARDINER.—And the Government accepted his statement. We are told that he is a subject of one of our Allies. Suspicion can rest upon the fairest reputation in the community. If an American citizen resident in Australia has a charge levelled against him, surely we have not reached that stage where our Government can send that person back without trial to America. Senator Grant has stated that Freeman has been for ten years in Australia. If that be the case, the position of the Government is all the worse when they hold that such a man can be picked up from his peaceful employment in the interior of Australia and sent back quietly to America. What is the good of the Government pretending there is any military danger in regard to this individual? Our War Precautions Act and Regulations were not intended, surely, for friends of the Government to be able to move the Government to get them a mining show which they could not secure by any other means. The Government may be in the possession of information that would damn this man in the eyes of the public. But the more damnable their information the greater need is there for a trial. Freeman protests

his innocence, and the people are sufficiently fair-minded to demand, not only for an innocent man a fair trial, but the same meed of justice for a guilty man.

I am able to draw a distinction in regard to internees against whom there has been only suspicion. It fell to my lot to have to order the internment of certain individuals who were deemed to constitute a danger to this country in time of war. Any party so regarded was interned in order that he might have no further opportunity to assist our enemies, and endanger us. It was right that every such precaution should be taken, even where there was only suspicion against the person concerned. The one correct course of action was to promptly place him where he could do no harm. But Paul Freeman is not being given a fair deal to-day. His treatment is un-British and un-Australian, and the sooner the Government realize the danger of goading the people into resistance of their actions, when such actions are not based upon the law, the better. My blood boils at the thought of a decent working man toiling away miles out from the outposts of civilization, and being suddenly taken by order of the Government, and dragged away from his occupation as a miner, wherein—we are assured by Senator Grant—he could earn £3 per day.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Who has the mine now?

Senator MAUGHAN.—You will have to give notice of that question.

Senator GARDINER.—I do not know. I know that he communicated with the Acting Premier of Queensland to see that his mining interests were protected.

Senator GRANT.—And Mr. Theodore replied that he was looking after his interests.

Senator GARDINER.—The point I am trying to make is that this man was in the country before the war, and, according to the Minister, the only charge levelled against him was that of not reporting as an alien. He was brought up at Cloncurry on that charge. The Minister, in reply to Senator Grant's statement that he was never in the hands of the authorities, mentioned that he was brought up on the charge of failing to report as an alien in June, 1918. The



war had then been raging for nearly four years, and, according to the admission of the Minister, there was nothing against this man but the charge of not reporting himself. There was clearly no evidence against him, or the Government would surely have given it, to show that he was a danger to the community. It is the merest pretence for the Government to say that in this case they are carrying out the law with regard to aliens who may be a menace to the country during a time of war. I asked what was the date on which the Government dealt with this case. The Minister refused to give the information, or, at all events, he did not give it. But if this man was brought up in June, to take the Minister's own words, it must have been considerably after June when the Government dealt with his case. We know that the armistice was signed in November, and for the life of me I cannot see any honest reason why the Government should desire to keep this man in prison—for he is in prison at the present time.

The PRESIDENT.—The honorable senator's time has expired.

Senator O'KEEFE (Tasmania) [4.42].—The Acting Minister for Defence (Senator Russell), in replying to Senator Grant, said that, while he had told a very interesting story, he had, unfortunately, not given all the facts. I tell the Minister that, while he has given an interesting reply, and a quotation from the Act of Parliament under which action was taken in this case, he did not give all the facts, and his statements may mislead the country. He quoted the words of the War Precautions Act, and charged Senator Gardiner with being a member of the Parliament and of the Government responsible for the passing of that Act.

Senator RUSSELL.—I made no such charge.

Senator O'KEEFE.—The statement has come freely from the other side, and it is a fact that the War Precautions Act, under which this man has been dealt with, was passed by a Government of which Senator Gardiner was a member. Senator Russell quoted from the War

Precautions Act to show that the Minister administering it may order the deportation of aliens, and thereby left it to the country to believe that he is satisfied that this man is an alien. Later on in his statement he admitted inferentially that he is not yet satisfied as to whether the man is an alien or not. I think I am right in putting that construction on the Minister's reply. The Government believe him to be an alien—

Senator MILLEN.—He claims to be an alien.

Senator O'KEEFE.—He claims to be an American.

Senator MILLEN.—That is an alien.

Senator O'KEEFE.—We mean an enemy alien. Senator Millen need not attempt to split straws. The honorable senator knows that although Americans are aliens, there are thousands of them in this country whom the Government would never dream of deporting. Senator Russell's reason for the action of the Government is that they believe Freeman to be a German. The weakness of the Minister's position is that the Government have refused to give this man an opportunity of proving that he is not a German. I do not know Paul Freeman, and have never seen him. I know nothing of his case beyond what I was able to read in the newspapers when I was in another State. I have only the interest in Freeman which, I think, should be held by every public man in Australia: I wish to see that every citizen of this country gets a fair trial in the Courts before he is dealt with in this way. We know that there have been other cases in which men have been allowed to remain in gaol, and though they have pleaded for a trial, and an opportunity to face their accusers and prove their innocence, they have been denied that opportunity for several months when it should have been afforded them at the outset. This kind of action is repugnant to the spirit of freedom which I believe to be inherent in every Australian, no matter what his political colour may be. Neither this man nor any other should be deported from Australia without being given a fair trial. Unless the Government are absolutely certain that Freeman



is a German, and that his presence here would be a menace to the safety of the community, he should not be deported. The Government have not proved that he is a German, an enemy alien, but they tell us that they believe he is. If he is, the country should know it, and the man should be given an opportunity to prove that he is not if he can do so. I put it to the Government to say whether it is in accordance with the feeling of the people of Australia that, even before the war was over, any man should be held for month after month in an internment camp, or should be deported, without a trial in an open Court. According to the information which we have been able to glean from the press, it has not been proved that Paul Freeman is an enemy subject. He is being deported only because the Government believe him to be a German, and they will not give the public the reasons for their belief. What has happened to Freeman may happen to any other man in this country to-morrow, and I am sure that Australia will not stand for that kind of thing. In this case the procedure adopted is absolutely irregular and unfair, and I am satisfied that it is against the general wish of the country. Paul Freeman may be all that Senator Russell, who has to administer the War Precautions Act, believes him to be, but the members of the Government will themselves agree that neither he nor any other man should be condemned as guilty until he is given an opportunity to prove his innocence. The Government in this matter have reversed the usual order of things. It is a well-known maxim of British justice that a man is supposed to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty. The action taken under the War Precautions Act in this case is a violation of that maxim. The Government say that they believe Freeman to be guilty, and the onus of proof is upon him to show that he is innocent, while at the same time they do not give him an opportunity to prove his innocence. I have risen in defence of the principle that no man should be interned for any longer than is necessary to prepare for a trial of his case, and no man should be deported until he is given an opportunity of showing why he should not

*Senator O'Keefe.*

be deported. If upon trial the verdict of the Court is that if set at liberty he would be a menace to the country, let him go back to the internment camp.

Senator LYNCH.—Has he been sent out of America?

Senator O'KEEFE.—That is what we want to know. We want to know why he was sent out of America. The facts, or alleged facts or statements, on which action has been taken should be made known, so that the people may know as much as the Government know of the matter.

Senator LYNCH.—Is it a fact that the American Government would not admit Freeman?

Senator O'KEEFE.—I take Senator Russell's statement for it that it is a fact that the American Government refused to re-admit him on the ground that he had not established citizenship.

Senator LYNCH.—Was that the only ground?

Senator O'KEEFE.—I do not know of any other. If there are other reasons, and if the Government are in possession of them, they should let the people of this country know why the American Government would not re-admit Freeman. He is a citizen of some country, and if the Government can prove that he is a citizen of Germany, or of any other enemy country, they should do so in open court. The public should not be left under the uneasy feeling that at any time the Government may put their hand on any man and say, "You must go out of Australia." If he asks, "What for?" the Government say, "Never mind what for; out you go." There is no party politics about this matter, and it is up to the Government to let the country know what reasons they have for believing Freeman to be of German origin, and that his being allowed to be at large in Australia would be a menace to the country. They should let us know why they insist on his deportation, and why they refuse him a public trial, which would show what prompted the action they have taken.

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [4.55].—I did not intend to take up time on this question. But I would like to inform honorable senators from other parts of Australia that this is not



a question of party politics at all. Quite recently a committee was formed in Sydney, representative of all classes of the community, and these people are appealing for fair and just treatment to this man. They include the heads of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, as well as Miss Rose Scott, who, as long as I can remember, has been connected with every organization in this country which has had at heart the welfare of her fellow men and women. If any man is disloyal to the country he lives in, nobody would be more pleased to see him deported than I would. But if Paul Freeman has been unjustly treated, as he affirms, the Government should promptly remedy the injustice. If Freeman went out into the bush amongst the mosquitoes, flies, and other insect pests which worry mankind in the back-blocks, and discovered wealth there—wealth which will prove beneficial to this country as well as to himself—it is an outrage that he should be torn away from it and deported unless he is guilty of some crime. Upon a matter of this kind there is no need for the Government to adopt secret methods. They can confidently appeal to public opinion. They can prove to the people, "This man is not loyal, and therefore we wish to deport him." But the persons whose names I have mentioned have banded themselves together for the purpose of fighting for Freeman's liberty, and I certainly think that the Government ought to consider their representations. I was present amongst an enormous crowd in Sydney when the threat was made that if the Government did not take Paul Freeman off the *Sonoma* the people would do so; and, had it not been for the wire which came through from Melbourne, and was read to the meeting, they would have taken him off the vessel. Even then, it was not the Government which took him off; it was the ship's officers, who carried him ashore. It is a singular circumstance that upon every occasion on which the Government come into conflict with a State they are defeated. Even the State of New South Wales took their army from them when they had placed it in quarantine, and marched it out to the Sydney Cricket Ground. Thus, the

great military power possessed by the Commonwealth proved to be valueless. Something should certainly be done in this matter. Paul Freeman should be given a fair trial. If he is guilty of disloyalty to this country nobody would be more pleased when he left it than I would.

**Senator GRANT** (New South Wales) [4.58].—I listened very carefully to the reply of the Acting Minister for Defence (Senator Russell), and I confess that I was entirely disappointed with his statement. He knew perfectly well that Paul Freeman has been detained in custody, and naturally I thought that the Government must be in possession of some very definite information against that man. But the honorable gentleman has entirely failed to disclose that they possess any such information, or, indeed, any information which justifies them in the action that they have taken. In the past, many individuals and many Governments have made mistakes, and if the present Government, in carrying out the multifarious duties which have devolved upon them during the past year or two, have made a mistake in this instance, it is not too late for them to admit it and to retire from their untenable position. That is the proper and honorable course for them to pursue. They have no information whatever against this man. Senator McDougall has referred to a committee which has been formed in Sydney for the purpose of endeavouring to secure justice for Freeman. He mentioned a few of the names of those who constitute that committee, and, perhaps, I may be pardoned for placing the whole of those names upon record. By so doing, I shall be able to demonstrate clearly that there is nothing whatever of a political character in the agitation which is gathering strength daily for the immediate release of Freeman. Rather is it a purely spontaneous and humanitarian movement, which will grow in volume until either some definite information is supplied by the Government against Freeman or he is released. The committee consists of the following:—The Reverend Dean Talbot, Reverend Father O'Reilly, Miss Rose Scott, Miss May Matthews,



Mrs. Locke Burns, Messrs. P. Brookfield, M.L.A., G. Cann, M.L.A., William Kearsley, M.L.A., J. P. Cochran, M.L.A., and E. Judd. The honorary treasurers are Mr. William Lowe, a well-known business man in the city, and Mr. J. P. Minahan, another well-known business man. The constitution of this committee affords pretty conclusive evidence that there is no intention whatever of making any political capital out of the present agitation. It is merely an agitation to secure justice for a man who is being seriously wronged by the action of the Government. While it is recognised that on this occasion Paul Freeman has felt the heavy hand of the military authorities, it is equally recognised that any other unoffending citizen may be similarly pounced upon at any moment. In conclusion, I may say that whilst Freeman complains very bitterly of the treatment which he received from the warrant officer whilst he was in his prison cell he speaks very highly indeed of his treatment by the nurses and doctors who attended him at Victoria Barracks. At the same time, I think he should be removed from there, and that he should be given some sunshine during the period that he is kept in custody. I ask the Government either to bring a direct charge against this man or to set him at liberty.

Question resolved in the negative.

## ADJOURNMENT.

### HOUSING OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES AND PORT PIRIE SMELTING EMPLOYEES.

Motion (by Senator MILLEN) proposed—

That the Senate do now adjourn.

Senator McDUGALL (New South Wales) [5.3].—I take this opportunity of mentioning a little matter which I regard as of urgent importance: I refer to the want of adequate housing accommodation for the workmen on the trans-continental railway. Having just had a look at some of the hovels in which these men are compelled to live, I think it is up to the Government, through the Railways Commissioner, to see that decent living accommodation is provided for

these employees. I do not propose to discuss the housing question from the stand-point of State management, although it is apparent that the leading States are now giving close attention to it. But quite recently, in connexion with the outbreak of influenza, we learned a lesson that we had never learnt before, namely, that a great proportion of the working men of this country are not housed as they should be. I am pointing this out, because it is a Commonwealth matter. At the present time we have good workshops in Port Augusta, which are intended to do good work in connexion with our transcontinental railway. But it is impossible for the Railways Commissioner to retain the services of good men in those workshops, because they will not submit to the inferior accommodation that is provided for them in Port Augusta. I endeavoured to ascertain why some private individual did not undertake the erection of suitable houses there, because it appeared to me to be a paying proposition. The place is a permanent one, and if we are to keep good men in the workshops at Port Augusta, it is necessary that the Government should provide that accommodation. I consulted the municipal authorities on the matter, but they say that it is not their duty to provide it. It is certainly somebody's duty to see that these men in the employ of the Commonwealth at Port Augusta and other places have decent housing accommodation. In this connexion I have a suggestion to make to the Government. I know that they are attempting to cope with this evil, but the efforts they are making are entirely inadequate. We all know that things are not as bright as they used to be at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, and the Government have, therefore, purchased at the former place some twenty houses which they have transported to and erected in Port Augusta, in order to provide some of the urgently required housing accommodation. My suggestion is that they should establish a model village on their own land, close to Port Augusta, in order that the employees in the railway workshops there may be comfortably housed, and that those who con-



trol those workshops may be able to retain the services of good workmen. We know that a large sum of money was expended at Canberra in the erection of houses which were intended for the reception of German prisoners who were to come from Singapore and other places. Those buildings were never used. I do not know that the houses intended for these prisoners would be suitable for occupation by our railway employees, but I am told that the residences which were erected for those who were to guard the prisoners would be very suitable indeed. These dwellings could be shipped to the water front and landed almost on the site I have suggested. Would it not be a great deal better to utilize these residences than to allow them to rot at Canberra? I trust that the Minister who is responsible will make inquiries into this matter, and see if something cannot be done to house our own workmen under better conditions than obtain to-day at Port Augusta and other points on the transcontinental line.

Senator Lt.-Colonel O'LOUGHLIN (South Australia) [5.9].—I desire to supplement the remarks made by Senator McDougall, particularly in regard to my own State. I have not been to Port Augusta very recently, but Senator McDougall has only just returned from there, and I think we are all prepared to accept his statement that the accommodation which is provided for the workmen on our transcontinental railway is very inadequate indeed. Personally, I claim to know a good deal about the conditions which obtain at Port Pirie—a larger centre than Port Augusta, and one in which the lack of housing accommodation is very acutely felt. I connect the men employed on the smelting works with the Commonwealth Government by reason of the fact that during the war they were largely engaged in the production of materials that were used in war work. The Acting Minister for Defence will doubtless remember that last year I asked whether the Government could not insist upon better housing accommodation being provided for these workmen at Port Pirie by reason of the fact that they were indirectly engaged upon Commonwealth work. Only a few months ago I attended a

meeting, convened by the Mayor at Port Pirie, for the purpose of considering the acute condition of affairs with regard to housing accommodation there. Certain resolutions, which I think were sent on to the State and Commonwealth Governments, were passed. There is an immense number of men employed there, and the accommodation is utterly inadequate. Men are paying up to 15s. per week for the use of one room, and in some cases two and three families are crowded together in a small house owing to the fact that not only are rents so high, but that dwellings are practically unobtainable—people are obliged to congregate in small tenements almost like savages. I take this opportunity of reiterating what has been said upon this subject, and while I am not so intimately conversant with the state of affairs at Port Augusta to which Senator McDougall has referred, I supplement his remarks so far as concerns the state of affairs in Port Pirie.

Senator RUSSELL (Victoria—Vice-President of the Executive Council) [5.11].—I can assure Senator McDougall that the Government are in complete sympathy with his remarks, so far as the housing accommodation at Port Augusta or any other part of Australia is concerned. We recognise that this is one of the big problems which Australia has to face in the near future. There seems to be some doubt about the feasibility of Senator McDougall's suggestion that houses should be transported to Port Augusta; but I will bring this matter under the notice of the Railway authorities, and see if something can be done to meet the existing difficulty.

Senator McDougall.—They are transporting houses over the line now.

Senator RUSSELL.—Perhaps they are not being transported rapidly enough. The Commissioner has supplied me with the following reply to a statement made by Senator McDougall through the press a few days ago with regard to overcrowding at Port Augusta:—

The men spoken of in the paragraph are probably not all railway men, but most likely include wharf labourers, men from the Salt Works and others. The Commonwealth



railways could only provide residences for its permanent employees, and quite a number of the men at present engaged are upon temporary work which will "peter out." The provision of homes for such men and their families seems one for the State Government, Town Council, or private enterprise. The Commonwealth Railways own some seventy-six residences, occupied by its employees, and another ten are in course of erection. When the line was opened right through it became necessary to transfer a number of men from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta, and the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner offered to bring over material of their houses free, and to let them have an allotment at Port Augusta at a peppercorn rental if they would erect houses, and made a similar offer as to allotments at peppercorn rentals to men already at Port Augusta. Money for erecting homes is obtainable under the South Australian Housing Act at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Commonwealth railways have not had much assistance from local authorities at Port Augusta, and have to provide their own water supply, electric lighting and power, and part of fire protection.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senate adjourned at 5.14 p.m.

## House of Representatives.

*Wednesday, 25 June, 1919.*

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### NEW MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a return to the writ issued for the election of a member to serve in the House of Representatives for the electoral division of Corangamite in the place of the Honorable James Chester Manifold, deceased, indorsed with a certificate of the election of William Gerrand Gibson, Esq.

Mr. GIBSON made and subscribed the oath of allegiance.

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

Assent to the following Bills reported:—

Iron and Steel Bounty Bill.  
Conciliation and Arbitration Bill (No. 2).  
Income Tax Bill (No. 2).

War-time Profits Tax Assessment Bill (No. 2).  
Chief Justice's Pension Bill.  
War Precautions Bill.  
Appropriation Bill 1918-19.  
War Service Homes Bill.  
Deceased Soldiers' Estates Bill.  
Naval Defence Bill.  
Public Service Bill (No. 3).  
Defence Bill (No. 3).

### THE LATE LORD FORREST.

Mr. SPEAKER.—During the recent adjournment I received from Lady Forrest a letter which, omitting references of a personal nature, was as follows:—

Hotel Imperial, Queen's Gate,  
London, 7th December, 1918.

MY DEAR MR. JOHNSON,

My deepest gratitude and thanks are due to you and all the members of the Federal Parliament for kind expressions of sympathy at the sad loss of my dear husband, Lord Forrest.

My heartfelt thanks to you all.

Very sincerely yours,

MARGARET ELVIRE FORREST.

### THE LATE SIR GEORGE REID.

Mr. SPEAKER reported the receipt of the following letter from Mr. Douglas W. Reid:—

10 Brendon House,  
Great Woodstock-street,  
London, W., 9th January, 1919.

DEAR MR. ELLIOT JOHNSON,

My mother has asked me to thank you most sincerely for your great kindness in sending her copies of the resolution passed in the House when the death of my father was announced. She is greatly touched by the kind references which were made to my father's work for Australia's welfare, and the record of the expression of sympathy by the Commonwealth Parliament with us in our sad time will always remain a most cherished possession.

Yours very sincerely,  
DOUGLAS W. REID.

### PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Immigration Act—Return for 1918 showing—(a) Persons refused admission; (b) passed dictation test; (c) admitted without being asked to pass test; (d) departures of coloured persons.  
Contract Immigrants Act—Return for 1918, respecting Contract Immigrants admitted or refused admission into the Commonwealth, &c.

Commonwealth Bank Act—Commonwealth Bank of Australia—

Aggregate balance-sheet at 31st December, 1918, with Auditor-General's Report thereon.

Death and Invalidity in the Commonwealth—Committee concerning causes of—Report on Diphtheria.

Defence—Report by Surgeon-General R. H. Fetherston, Director-General A.A.M.S., to the Minister for Defence on—1. Australian Army Medical Services Overseas. 2. The Medical Services of Great Britain and the Allies. 3. Re-education and Re-establishment of War Cripples in America, Europe, and India.

Northern Territory—Report of the Administrator for year ended 30th June, 1918.

Small Arms Factory—Report for year ended 30th June, 1918.

\*Agricultural Wages Board—Report of Committee appointed by, to inquire into the Financial Results of the Occupation of Agricultural Land and the Cost of Living of Rural Workers.

\*Agriculture—Wages and Conditions of employment in—

Vol. I.—General Report.

Vol. II.—Report of Investigators.

Arbitration (Public Service) Act—Awards of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, and other documents, in connexion with complaints submitted by the—

Australian Commonwealth Post and Telegraph Officers' Association—Dated 16th and 18th December, 1918.(2)

Australian Commonwealth Public Service Clerical Association—

Dated 16th and 18th December, 1918.

Dated 14th March, 1919.

Australian Letter Carriers' Association—

Dated 16th December, 1918.(2)

Dated 18th December, 1918.(2)

Australian Telegraph and Telephone Construction and Maintenance Union—Dated 3rd March, 1919.

Commonwealth General Division Telephone Officers' Association—

Dated 16th and 18th December, 1918.

Dated 6th March, 1919.

Commonwealth Legal Professional Officers' Association—Dated 6th March, 1919.

Federated Public Service Assistants' Association—

Dated 18th December, 1918.(2)

Dated 18th December, 1918.(2)

Dated 31st March, 1919.

General Division Officers' Union of the Trade and Customs Department—

Dated 16th and 18th December, 1918.

Dated 6th March, 1919.

Meat Inspectors' Association—Commonwealth Public Service—Dated 27th March, 1919.

Postal Sorters' Union of Australia—Dated 16th December, 1918.

Audit Act—

Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 47, 52, 60.

Transfers of Amounts approved by the Governor-General in Council—Financial year 1918-19—

Dated 26th March, 1919.

Dated 30th April, 1919.

Dated 28th May, 1919.

Dated 6th June, 1919.

\*Bolshevism in Russia—Collection of Reports on.

\*Coal Industry Commission—Two Interim Reports and Report (all dated 20th March, 1919).

Commerce (Trades Descriptions) Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 11, 88.

\*Cost of Living—Report of the Working Classes Cost of Living Committee, 1918.

\*Criminal Law Amendment Bill and Sexual Offences Bill—Report from the Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendices.

Customs Act—

Proclamations prohibiting Exportation of (except under certain conditions)—

Cheese containing margarine or other fatty substance (dated 30th April, 1919).

Condensed Milk (dated 5th March, 1919).

Goods per parcel post (dated 8th January, 1919).

Russian rouble notes (dated 29th January, 1919).

Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 41, 86, 87, 137, 138.

Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 67.

Defence Act—

Regulations Amended—

Statutory Rules 1918, Nos. 319, 320, 321, 322, 333, 334.

Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 6, 10, 13, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26, 33, 38, 39, 42, 48, 49, 50, 54, 61, 64, 65, 66, 72, 73, 74, 91, 92, 95, 104, 105, 111, 114, 121, 122, 126, 127.

\*Dye Industry—State Assistance to—Memorandum by the Board of Trade.

Electoral Act and Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 57.

\*Electric Power Supply—Report of the Committee of Chairmen, Advisory Council.

\*Employers and Employed—Committee on Relations between—Final Report.

\*Emigration Bill 1918—Correspondence.



\*Engineering Trades (New Industries) Committee—Report.

Entertainments Tax Assessment Act—Regulations Amended—  
 Statutory Rules 1918, No. 289.  
 Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 51, 68.

Excise Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 118.

\*Gold Production of the British Empire—Report of Committee.

\*Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18—Report.

Lands Acquisition Act—Land acquired under, at—  
 Currie, King Island, Tasmania—For Postal purposes.  
 Fairy Meadow, Federal Territory—For purpose of obtaining Building Material.  
 Five Dock, Sydney, New South Wales—For Repatriation purposes.  
 Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, Queensland—For Repatriation purposes.  
 Launceston, Tasmania—For Defence purposes.  
 Lithgow, New South Wales—For Defence purposes. (3)  
 North Sydney, New South Wales—For Defence purposes.  
 For Repatriation purposes.  
 Port Augusta, South Australia—For Railway purposes. (2)  
 Port Pirie, South Australia—For Customs purposes.  
 For Defence purposes.  
 Redfern, New South Wales—For Repatriation purposes.  
 Rosemount, Queensland—For Defence purposes.  
 Westernport, Victoria—For Defence purposes.

\*Machinery of Government—Report of Committee.

Naturalization Act—Return of Number of Persons to whom Naturalization Certificates were granted during 1918.

Naval Defence Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 18, 19, 58, 62, 63, 110, 135.

Northern Territory—  
 Ordinance of 1918—  
 No. 13—Real Property.

Ordinances of 1919—  
 No. 1—Interpretation.  
 No. 2—Bush Fires.  
 No. 3—Jury.  
 No. 4—Bank Holidays.  
 No. 5—Workmen's Dwellings.

Papua—  
 Ordinances of 1918—  
 No. 11—Native Taxes.  
 No. 13—Venereal Diseases.

Ordinance of 1919—  
 No. 1—Native Plantations.

Patents Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 14, 30.

Post and Telegraph Act—Regulations Amended—  
 Statutory Rules 1918, Nos. 327, 330, 335.  
 Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 22, 37, 56, 124, 131, 132, 133, 146.

Public Service Act—  
 Appointments, Promotions, &c.—  
 W. Carrick, Postmaster-General's Department.  
 H. W. Conolly, Postmaster-General's Department.  
 A. Crisp, A. J. Harney, A. H. Harper, Department of Defence.  
 V. R. Driscoll, Prime Minister's Department.  
 A. W. B. Fawcett, Postmaster-General's Department.  
 J. Fennessy, Prime Minister's Department.  
 T. S. Harrison, Department of the Treasury.  
 R. H. Henniker, Postmaster-General's Department.  
 H. C. Hine and D. E. Aikins, Prime Minister's Department.  
 G. J. Hogben, Prime Minister's Department.  
 M. O. Matthes, Prime Minister's Department.  
 G. E. R. McCarthy, Attorney-General's Department.  
 W. Y. O'Driscoll, A. Perry, and T. J. Webster, Prime Minister's Department.  
 J. M. Ramsay, Attorney-General's Department.  
 G. H. Waite, Prime Minister's Department.  
 K. C. Waugh, Attorney-General's Department.  
 S. M. White and M. T. Keely, Department of the Treasury.

Regulations Amended—  
 Statutory Rules 1918, No. 312.  
 Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 17, 25, 27, 40, 59, 93, 94, 99, 109, 120.

Railways Act—  
 By-law No. 9.  
 By-law No. 10.

Seamen's Compensation Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 139.

Seat of Government—Ordinances of 1919—  
 No. 2—Timber Protection.  
 No. 3—Fish Protection.  
 No. 4—Cotter River.

Spirits Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules 1919, No. 69.

The War—  
 \*Advisory Bodies (other than Reporting Committees) appointed by the Minister of Reconstruction—Statement with regard to.  
 \*Armistices with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey—Terms of, signed 11th November, 1918.

- \*Armistice with Germany—  
Conditions of, signed 11th November, 1918.
- Convention prolonging, signed 16th January, 1919; together with the Financial Protocol, signed 13th December, 1918.
- \*Austro-Hungarian Government—Note addressed by, to the Governments of all the belligerent States, September, 1918.
- \*Building Industry after the War—Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Reconstruction to consider the position of.
- \*Civil War Workers' Committee—2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Interim Reports.
- \*Demobilization and Re-settlement—Regulations made by the Military Service (Civil Liabilities) Committee.
- \*Education in the Army—Second Interim Report of the Adult Education Committee.
- \*Emergency Legislation—First and Second Reports from the Select Committee.
- Emergency Legislation passed by the Parliaments of the Empire in consequence of the War—Summary of.
- \*Employment of Women during the War—Report of the Board of Trade on the increased employment in the United Kingdom, with Statistics up to April, 1918.
- Finland—Treaty of Peace signed at Berlin between Germany and Finland, together with the Commercial and Shipping Agreement.
- \*Government War Insurance Schemes—Preliminary Statement of Results.
- \*German Colonies—Correspondence relating to the wishes of the natives of the German Colonies as to their future Government.
- Germany—Reports by British (Army) Officers on the Economic Conditions prevailing in—December, 1918-March, 1919.
- Hospital Ships—Circular Despatch addressed to His Majesty's Diplomatic Representatives in Allied and Neutral Countries respecting torpedoing of certain Hospital Ships by German submarines.
- \*Imperial War Conference, 1918—Extracts from Minutes of Proceedings and Papers laid before the Conference.
- \*Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Acts—Report of the Committee on.
- \*Merchant Tonnage and the Submarine—Supplementary Statement, showing, for the United Kingdom and for the World, for the period August, 1914, to October, 1918—(1) Losses; (2) Shipbuilding Output; (3) Enemy Vessels Captured, &c.

- \*Ministry of Reconstruction (British)—Report on the Work of, for the period ending 31st December, 1918.
- \*National Expenditure—Select Committee—  
Memorandum on Sixth Report.  
Ninth Report (Procedure of the House), together with an Appendix. Tenth Report.
- \*National Relief Fund—Report of the Administration of, to 30th September, 1918.
- Prisoners of War—  
\*Agreement between the British and German Governments concerning combatant prisoners of war and civilians. Employment in Coal and Salt Mines of British prisoners of war in Germany—Report on.  
Treatment by the Germans of prisoners of war taken during the Spring offensive of 1918—  
\*Report  
Further Report.
- \*Treatment of British prisoners of war in Turkey—Report.
- \*Trade—Report on the Trade of Australia for the year 1917, by Mr. G. T. Milne (H. M. Trade Commissioner in the Commonwealth).
- War Precautions Act—Regulations Amended—  
Statutory Rules 1918, Nos. 326, 331, 332.  
Statutory Rules 1919, Nos. 4, 5, 8, 29, 34, 36, 46, 53, 70, 71, 112, 113, 116, 128.
- Wireless Telegraphy Act—Regulations Amended—Statutory Rules, No. 134.
- Wool Clip—Statement re the British Imperial Government's Purchase through the Commonwealth Government of the Australian Wool Clip—Balance of Season 1916-17.
- \*Papers presented to the British Parliament.

### SUPPLY BILL (No. 1) 1919-20.

Mr. SPEAKER reported the receipt of a Message from His Excellency the Governor-General, recommending an appropriation for the purposes of this Bill. Referred to Committee of Supply.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. WATT (Balaclava—Acting Prime Minister and Treasurer) [3.8].—(By leave.)—Upon the reassembling of Parliament, I desire, on behalf of the Government, to make an announcement as to the business of the session and other important matters.

1. Until the protracted deliberations of the Peace Conference were approaching



finality, it was considered inadvisable to summon the Houses for the discussion of public business. Even now the information at the disposal of the Government as to the terms of peace is not sufficient to warrant the submission of the matter to Parliament, and it appears probable that it will have to await the return of the Australian representatives.

Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook are expected to leave Britain this week, and, as soon as practicable after they reach Melbourne, the Peace Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations will be presented for the consideration of honorable members. The Government appreciates the momentous importance of the decisions of the Conference, which, in addition to far-reaching territorial, racial, and economic determinations, involve such vital questions to this young nation as disarmament, indemnities, and the destination of the former German Colonies in the Western Pacific.

At the request of the Imperial Government, Executive authority was conferred upon the Australian Ministers to sign the Treaty on behalf of the Commonwealth, but the adoption or otherwise will be dependent on the will of Parliament.

The Government feels that the powerful and sustained efforts of the Prime Minister for the preservation of Australia's interests entitle him to the unqualified approbation of the people and Parliament.

2. It will be noted with pleasure that the demobilization and return of our Armies is now proceeding, notwithstanding the inherent difficulties, swiftly and satisfactorily.

Up to 31st May, 1919, approximately 169,000 members of the Australian Imperial Force had returned to Australia; 3,300 had been discharged at their own request overseas; 18,000 were *en route* to Australia, leaving about 79,000 still to be repatriated. If the present shipping provision is maintained, all our troops, except the Depôt and Head-Quarters Staffs, will have embarked for Australia by the end of next month.

The success which is attending this great task amply confirms the steps taken by the Government in placing the work in the hands of a responsible Minister in London.

Mr. Watt.

We record with gratitude and pleasure the return of the Australian Navy to its home station after its splendid services overseas.

3. With no lessons to be drawn from experience, either here or abroad, the Department of Repatriation has been established.

To the end of last month 94,036 applicants presented 177,478 applications for assistance under all headings; 150,350 were granted, 42,470 men were placed in employment, and 7,513 allotted to vocational training, of which number 2,466 have completed their courses and been placed in employment.

Extra facilities now being provided will enable up to 15,000 additional men to be thus trained.

Notwithstanding the serious effects of the influenza epidemic and the strike upon employment, the number on the books of the Department awaiting employment is only 6,810 (inclusive of 2,500 men who have been thrown back on the Department by the influenza epidemic and the strike), being 3.86 per cent. of the total number discharged.

The total expenditure incurred in direct assistance to returned men and their dependants is £1,023,939.

The powers of Local Repatriation Committees have recently been greatly extended, and it is anticipated that this decentralization will insure the treatment of applications with a minimum of delay.

With a view to making more ample provision for returned soldiers desiring to settle upon the land, the Government recently undertook to advance to the States the money necessary to make available the requisite number of holdings, and for railways and other works necessary to their successful occupation. It further agreed to provide an advance up to £625 per settler. The total liability of the Commonwealth in respect of land settlement is estimated at between 30 and 40 millions.

The "spade work" in connexion with the Housing scheme for returned soldiers, which was authorized by Parliament in December last, has been heavy, and surrounded by many difficulties. The initial stages are complete, and the operations of

the Department are now being entered upon. It is intended to extend the provisions of the Housing scheme to munition and other workers who undertook war service abroad under contract.

The Government has given careful consideration to the question of employment of returned soldiers and sailors in the Public Service, and has, in their interests, modified to a considerable extent the conditions of employment, both temporary and permanent.

Although much general repatriation work yet remains, and experience is continually pointing to fresh activities and new methods, it may fairly be said that the repatriation machinery is running smoothly, and the system, considering its magnitude, has already achieved gratifying results.

4. The influenza epidemic in our midst has caused regrettable loss of life and widespread distress.

Although quarantine is in the hands of the Commonwealth, important health powers still reside with the States.

When an outbreak of this disease appeared probable, the Government, with a keen desire to unite all the administrative forces of Australia in its attack, entered into an agreement with the States which provided for complete concert and co-operation.

This agreement was abrogated by several State Governments, who, in defiance of constitutional rights, imposed their own quarantine measures on land and sea traffic.

The result was lamentable disorganization of the shipping services, occasioning serious shortages of food supplies and fuel in many parts of the Commonwealth, and grave delays in the debarkation of our returning soldiers.

The futility of such methods was, however, gradually recognized by most of the States, and nearly all the local regulations have since been withdrawn.

5. The Government has prepared and forwarded, for the consideration of the Governments of Britain and the Dominions, a scheme providing for the administration, conversion, and extinction of the War Debts of the Empire.

6. A large number of the fleet of steamers which are owned in Australia

is still under Imperial requisition, but their release is expected within a few months. The vessels remaining in Australian waters are requisitioned under powers conferred under the War Precautions Act. As a result of the governmental control of Inter-State shipping, Australia has, during the war, enjoyed more favorable freights and fares than any other belligerent country. The urgent question of maintaining, after the present control expires, the cheap coastal services in the face of the tempting rates earned by tonnage in other waters, is at present engaging the attention of the Government.

During the past year the ship-building policy of the Commonwealth has been energetically pursued. Two steel vessels have been launched in Australia, ten more are under construction, and contracts have been entered into for another ten.

The contracts for wooden ships in Australia have, for the most part, been cancelled. It is the intention of the Government, when opportunity offers, to dispose of similar ships built on the Pacific coast of America.

The policy of the Government is to continue the Commonwealth Line of Steamers, and to build larger and faster vessels for our overseas trade, so that the producers of our exportable primary products shall be assured satisfactory shipping facilities at reasonable rates. Negotiations in this direction are at present in progress.

7. As indicated to Parliament in December last, Admiral Viscount Jellicoe is at present visiting Australia to consider and advise upon our future naval requirements. It is expected that his report will be received during the month of August. The Government is grateful to the Lords of the Admiralty and the British Cabinet for making available the services of so eminent an authority as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet of Britain.

8. In pursuance of a promise given to Parliament that the expenditure of the Commonwealth would be carefully reviewed during the recess, a Royal Commission was appointed to report on the



whole field of Commonwealth expenditure. The Commission's first progress report, which is now in preparation, will, it is hoped, be of material assistance in effecting reductions of expenditure in the Public Departments.

9. It has been found impossible to dispose of the unsold portions of our wheat upon anything like reasonable conditions. Shortage of tonnage has intensified the difficulties, so that, in addition to 870,000 tons which are still held for the Imperial Government and other buyers, the Australian Board has on hand stocks of over 2,000,000 tons, carrying an overdraft of £18,800,000.

Representatives of the wheat growers now sit on the Australian Board, and have publicly expressed approval of the efforts made on behalf of the producer.

In furtherance of its policy of assisting our primary producers, the Government has placed before the dairy farmers of Australia a scheme for the better organization of their industry and the standardization of their products. If, after full consultation with those concerned, a workable scheme acceptable to the great body of dairy farmers is evolved, the organization of producers in other lines of primary production will be considered.

10. The abrupt cessation of hostilities, and the vast accumulations of metals which are no longer required for warlike purposes, have exercised a paralyzing effect upon the metal markets of the world. It is feared that no substantial improvement is possible until those accumulations have been absorbed in peaceful arts and manufactures.

Vigorous efforts have been made by the Prime Minister to make sales of lead, copper, and tin with the Imperial Government, but, so far, without success. Negotiations are still proceeding. The zinc position is more fortunate, as the contract is for a period of ten years after the war. In the hope of maintaining the output of the copper mines and smelting works, the Government arranged to make advances to producing companies in respect of copper produced up to 31st March last.

It is the intention of the Government to make proposals to the Governments of

the States which are calculated to relieve materially the stagnation arising out of the unfortunate stoppage of production.

The reduced demand for rare metals has induced the Imperial Government to terminate many of its contracts, and, at present, proposals to cancel certain short-dated agreements are the subject of correspondence between the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments.

11. Notwithstanding the elaborate legislation and machinery designed by the Commonwealth and the States to prevent or settle industrial disputes, Australia is even at this critical time faced by grave domestic troubles of this character.

The seamen, who obtained increased wages and improved conditions under an award by the Commonwealth Court in January last, have struck, and thrown idle practically the whole of the Inter-State shipping. The Government intervened with the object of averting the disorganization of industry, but the seamen declined the mediation of the Court. The Government has, in order to conserve light and power for essential needs, imposed restrictions on the consumption of fuel.

The seamen's strike is already causing much unemployment in dependent industries, but as the attitude of the union constitutes a challenge to the authority and laws of this Parliament, the Government can offer no concessions. Unless wiser counsels prevail amongst those responsible, grave suffering to innocent industrialists and to the community must supervene.

12. With the exception of the control of a few commodities respecting which contracts exist with the British Government, or financial obligations have been incurred by the Commonwealth, the Government has withdrawn the orders made under the price-fixing regulations, and has wound up the organization of the Prices Commissioners.

It was considered advisable to gradually release these restrictions, and thus allow trade and commerce to adapt itself to normal conditions, rather than continue this form of control to the date when our powers would automatically come to an abrupt termination.

As the Commonwealth has not, in time of peace, the constitutional authority to deal with price-fixing, the exercise of such powers must now revert to the States.

There is indubitable evidence that, during the abnormal conditions created by the war, the operation of the Price-fixing Department has saved the consumer many millions sterling, and has prevented those tragic increases in the prices of goods which have been registered in every other country engaged in the great conflict.

13. In the spirit of the promise made to Parliament, the Government has repealed a considerable number of other regulations made under the War Precautions Act, and has removed or relaxed many restrictions operated under the Defence Acts, including Censorship.

14. Some months ago, having ascertained that the coal industry was in an unsettled and critical condition, and that the stocks of coal in many parts of the Commonwealth were dangerously low, the Government called the employers and employees together in conference. After full consideration, it was decided, in order to prevent a serious dislocation of industry, to authorize an increase of wages as agreed upon by the employers and employees, and a corresponding increase in the selling price of coal and coke.

15. The programme for the session will embrace the following:—

A Supply Bill covering the first two months of the new financial year, which will be the first measure tabled.

Bills for the supersession of the War Precautions Act, as indicated during the debate on the extension Bill last year. These will provide protection in relation to Wheat, Wool, Dairy Produce, and some other commodities which have been specially dealt with during the period of the war. Other matters of importance arising out of war activities or experience will also be submitted.

The Peace Treaty and its attendant Covenants.

16 L

A Tariff Bill, designed firstly to insure the preservation of those manufacturing enterprises inaugurated during the war, which are already being subjected to fierce competition; secondly, the encouragement of new undertakings which are basic and upon which our national safety depends; thirdly, the extension and diversification of existing industries; and generally the development of Australian production and manufacture.

A measure to facilitate and expedite the decision in industrial disputes, and improve the methods of the operation of the Arbitration Acts. Financial measures dealing with loans and taxation and the relations between the Commonwealth and the States.

Legislation dealing with naturalized subjects and aliens, with a view to the better safeguarding of national interests.

Amendments of the existing law providing for a closer inspection and control of immigrants, which the experience of the war has rendered necessary.

A Bill in relation to the method of voting at elections for the Senate.

A Bill to amend the Inter-State Commission Act.

The Bill to establish the Institute of Science and Industry, which has already passed the Senate.

A measure to establish the Bureau of Commerce and Industry.

A Bill to amend the Navigation Act, which must ere long be proclaimed. This amendment is necessary to bring the present Statute into line with more advanced legislation.

Several other measures, including Bills dealing with Customs, Defence, Lighthouses, Posts and Telegraphs, Estate Duty Assessment, Land Tax Assessment, Aviation, Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta Railway Lands, Quarantine, Lands Acquisition, Trade Marks, Shipbuilding and Shipping, and other matters.



This programme promises an arduous session, and the Government invites honorable members to co-operate in the consideration and passage of measures having for their object the welfare of the people of Australia.

Debate (on motion by Mr. TUDOR) adjourned.

## WHARF LABOURERS' DISPUTE.

### REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. TUDOR.—Can the Acting Prime Minister say when the report of the Royal Commissioner, who has been sitting in Melbourne inquiring into the wharf labourers' dispute, will be presented to His Excellency the Governor-General and be made available to this Parliament?

Mr. WATT.—I am afraid that I cannot. I observe by the press that the Royal Commissioner has completed the taking of evidence, but he has not yet submitted his report. As soon as it is submitted, it will receive the consideration of the Government.

## SEAMEN'S STRIKE.

### POSITION IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Is the Acting Prime Minister aware of the very serious position of North Queensland? North of Rockhampton there is no communication other than by sea, and, as a consequence of the seamen's strike, the people in that portion of Queensland are very short of provisions and also medical necessities very urgently required because of the prevalence of influenza. I have here a telegram from Bowen which tells me that, owing to the shortage of flour, starvation is imminent. In view of this, I ask the Acting Prime Minister if any Commonwealth overseas ships cannot be diverted in order to take provisions to Northern Queensland? I may be permitted to say that, although I have received a number of telegrams in reference to the seriousness of the position, in not one is it suggested that there should be any yielding on the part of the Government.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member has on very many occasions pointed out

to the Government, and chiefly to myself, the unfortunate position of many of the communities in Northern Queensland. Yesterday, particularly, he stressed the view that a special attempt should be made, apart altogether from the strike, to put a vessel in communication with places in Northern Queensland which are beyond the reach of railways. I got into communication with the Shipping Controller, to see how far this suggestion is capable of operation; and he advises me that he is already endeavouring to arrange for one vessel to load cargo for Northern Queensland ports. He points out that it is very difficult to induce the oversea ships to accept cargo for Northern Queensland ports on account of the uncertainty of arranging for the discharge of the cargo. In some cases ships have been hung up because of the refusal of the unions to handle cargo in Northern Queensland ports. The Shipping Controller further says that if definite assurance could be given that there would be no delay in the discharge of cargo, it would be possible to arrange for oversea ships to accept cargo.

## MR. JENSEN'S PASSPORT.

Mr. JENSEN.—Will the Minister for Home and Territories be good enough to lay on the table of the House the application form which I made out in Sydney in January last for a passport to enable me to proceed to London *via* America, and also the passport itself?

Mr. GLYNN.—I have no objection. It is not usual to disclose—

Mr. JENSEN.—I ask the question in consequence of allegations which have been made.

Mr. GLYNN.—I shall be glad to lay the documents on the table of the House as soon as I get them.

## CASE OF PAUL FREEMAN.

Mr. ANSTEY.—I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he will now, or, if not convenient now, at a later stage, make a statement as to the nature of the alleged offence of Paul Freeman? Will the Minister also inform the House of the names of the persons

who have made accusations against this man, of those who tried him and condemned him? If he has not been tried, and has had no opportunity of putting up a defence, why is he now kept in gaol?

Mr. WATT.—I am glad to see that the honorable member is back here in health and strength, and I can assure him that he has not lost any friends while he has been away. If the honorable member, in his usual courteous fashion, will give notice of this important question, I shall endeavour to supply him with the desired information.

#### JAPAN IN THE PACIFIC.

Mr. HIGGS.—Will the Acting Prime Minister lay on the table of the House a copy of the agreement or understanding between Great Britain and Japan which is said to have been approved of by Mr. Fisher and the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), whereby Japan was to occupy the Pacific Islands north of the equator, and Great Britain the islands south of the equator.

Mr. WATT.—I have only to reply to my, I was going to say respected, but I might almost say my revered friend, that in delicate matters affecting international relationships, I beg that Ministers be given notice of questions.

#### WOOL CLIP: ADJUSTMENT.

Mr. PIGOTT.—In view of the straitened circumstances of many graziers owing to the record drought from which they have suffered, will the Acting Prime Minister inform the House when the 10 per cent. reduction made from the wool clip will be adjusted, and also when the Imperial authorities will be likely to make a division of the profit, namely, up to 50 per cent. on the sale of the wool in London?

Mr. WATT.—That is a nice conundrum for the honorable member to expect to be answered off-hand! I cannot answer the honorable member now, but if he will give notice of the question, I shall have the data collected, if possible.

#### PEACE CELEBRATIONS.

REMISSION OF SOLDIERS' PUNISHMENTS—  
DATE AND NATURE OF CELEBRATIONS—  
CLOSING OF HOTELS—HOLIDAY PAY—  
EXPENDITURE ON ILLUMINATIONS.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I desire to know from the Acting Prime Minister whether in connexion with the celebrations of peace it is proposed to remit all fines and terms of imprisonment passed on soldiers for offences committed during the war?

Mr. WATT.—I am not prepared to give any such promise; but for the information of the House and the country generally, I may say that, appreciating the significance of the celebration of peace on the conclusion of our great war effort, and anticipating that the Governments of the Empire might consider acts of clemency towards prisoners of various classes, I have communicated on behalf of the Commonwealth Government with the Governments of the States of Australia to ascertain how far a uniform policy in relation to such sentences could be operated.

Mr. CORSER.—When will the Acting Prime Minister be able to advise the public as to the date of the Peace celebrations and the form which they will take in the Commonwealth?

Mr. WATT.—I think that within a few days of the date on which we receive definite news that Peace is signed, and of the arrangements that have been made by the British Government for the Peace celebrations at Home, we shall be able not only to say how far the celebrations will synchronize throughout the Empire, but to determine our own dates. The chairman of the Peace Celebrations Committee is here, and can perhaps speak more definitely than I can on the matter at the present moment; but it appears to me as if the 3rd and 4th August will be the days of the celebrations, Monday, 4th August, being the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the war.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—In the interests of peace and good order, will the Government arrange that all places licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors shall be closed during the Peace celebrations?



Mr. WATT.—The Government are considering that matter at the present time.

Mr. TUDOR.—Very many workers in the community, probably 90 per cent. of them, if compelled to take a Monday holiday, will lose pay for that day. Will the Government endeavour to make such arrangement, at any rate as employers, as will insure that the men who are compelled to take a holiday receive payment for that day?

Mr. WATT.—I have not yet considered whether an employer should be compelled to pay wages for a compulsory holiday, but I shall do so. It seems to me that if the peace is real, and the terms are as satisfactory as we all hope they will be, the people of this country, whatever their station in life, will not boggle over the minor questions that usually concern them. It may be, however, that owing to the present industrial disturbance, and widespread unemployment, the loss of a day's pay is more than usually serious.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Assuming the truth of the report that decorations on a lavish scale are to be carried out in the thoroughfares of Melbourne and other cities, I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the Government have definitely decided to approve of such lavish displays, or whether they may not be persuaded to devote the money to some useful purpose, such as the relief of the distress which is so marked a feature at the present time?

Mr. WATT.—I doubt whether any other than the honorable member for Batman would have placed in relation the two matters which he has mentioned. The Government have no desire for a lavish display.

Mr. BRENNAN. — The newspapers implied to the contrary.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member has seen erroneous statements in the press before to-day, concerning himself and all sorts of people. When the Government first considered, some months ago, the question of the celebration of Peace, if and when it should come, we requested a then member of the Ministry, the honorable member for Nepean (Mr. Orchard) to take charge of the matter. Within

the financial limits imposed by the Government, the honorable member was allowed a free hand to make arrangements with the State Governments and the municipal authorities, and his last report to me was that the amount which the Government thought they could afford to spend in celebrating Peace would not be more than half spent.

### HIGH PRICES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. FOWLER.—It is reported that the Premier of Western Australia has communicated with the Acting Prime Minister in regard to certain excessive prices that are being put on goods in Western Australia, with a view to some action on the part of the Government. I desire now to give the Acting Prime Minister an opportunity to say why the communication was not replied to, and whether this absence of a reply is due to indifference on the part of the Commonwealth Government in matters of this kind.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member is starting this session very badly—

Mr. FINLAYSON.—What he said he said very kindly!

Mr. WATT.—But when the question goes into *Hansard* it will not bear that Caledonian inflection which makes it so kind.

Mr. FOWLER.—I have no ulterior object; I merely wish to give you an opportunity to explain.

Mr. WATT.—I appreciate the honorable member's unfailing courtesy, but there is a sting in the tail of his question. The Government are not unmindful of their responsibility in matters of this kind. The first thing I saw in reference to this communication was the report in the press to which, undoubtedly, the honorable member refers. Doubtless this is one of the many communications which reach the Prime Minister's office, and, not being treated as a personal matter, are sent on to the Departments concerned. The honorable member no doubt knows the procedure in such cases. I may take the opportunity of saying that there is growing up in Australia a grave system of official discourtesy. Governments all over Aus-

tralia, and various other public bodies, announce in the press that they have sent communications to the Acting Prime Minister, who, however, seldom, if ever, sees them. The proper way to conduct official correspondence is to send it through the post or by telegraph, and give the information to the press after it has been received.

Mr. FOWLER.—Has no communication been officially received by your Department?

Mr. WATT.—I shall answer that question in due course; at present I am concerned with the question asked by the honorable member. Attention will be given to the matter, and I have no doubt that an answer has already been sent in the ordinary official course.

#### TABLING OF PAPERS.

CASE OF MR. YATES—COURT MARTIAL ON H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA"—MANUFACTURE OF STEEL FOR SHRAPNEL SHELL—PROSECUTION OF MR. MATHEWS.

Mr. MATHEWS. — Will the Acting Prime Minister lay upon the table of the Library—

1. The papers in connexion with the arrest and trial of Gunner Yates?

2. The papers connected with the trial of the men on H.M.A.S. *Australia* for mutiny at Fremantle?

3. All papers connected with the endeavour of the Government to secure the secret formula for the manufacture of steel for shrapnel shell to 1914-15?

4. The papers connected with the summoning and trial under the War Precautions Act of James Mathews at Maryborough in 1917?

Mr. WATT.—I should prefer to have the question in print on the notice-paper, so that I could understand the mysterious reason for the juxtaposition of the prosecution of James Mathews and the manufacture of shrapnel.

#### TASMANIAN IRON ORE DEPOSITS.

Mr. ATKINSON.—I understand that at present certain experts on iron ores are at Blythe River, Tasmania, on behalf of the Government. Can the Acting Prime Minister get those gentlemen to inspect the iron ore deposits at Ilfracombe, near Beauty Point, before they return?

Mr. WATT.—An application was made by the Government of Tasmania, when the intimation appeared in the press that the Commonwealth had sent experts to Blythe River, that certain other deposits should be examined. I do not know whether the particular deposit mentioned by the honorable member was on the list, but it was explained in our communications, as I remember them, to the Government of Tasmania, that we could not search for iron and find experts for the State Government to identify or describe iron ore in the many deposits in Tasmania. We are inspecting and having this place reported upon, because we have an option over it for Commonwealth purposes; but the States must do their own geological and mineralogical work.

#### NORTHERN TERRITORY ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Has the Minister for Home and Territories yet discovered a good practical man to direct the affairs of the Northern Territory pending the appointment of a new Administrator?

Mr. GLYNN.—Yes. I have not absolutely concluded the arrangement yet, but I have in my mind a man who, I think, will accomplish the end.

#### CASE OF CORPORAL WILLIAMS.

Mr. WATKINS. — Is the Assistant Minister for Defence aware that a certain military police officer in Sydney, who tried to arrest a returned soldier named Williams, has been committed to prison himself for the assault he then committed? Does he know that the returned soldier was ordered to be imprisoned for one day and fined thirty-eight days' pay by the military court martial? Seeing that the civil Court found that the military police were at fault, will the Minister arrange that the returned soldier shall receive the money due to him?

Mr. WISE.—I shall make inquiries on the subject.

#### SIGNING OF PEACE TREATY.

Mr. LISTER.—Has the Acting Prime Minister received confirmation by cablegram of the message picked up by the



Perth Radio Station on Tuesday morning that Peace has been signed?

Mr. WATT.—Not yet.

### COURT MARTIAL ON H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA.

Mr. TUDOR.—Can the Acting Prime Minister, in the absence of the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton), state whether there is any appeal from the awful sentences passed by the recent navy court martial on the Australian boys who were alleged to have committed some breach of discipline on the *Australia*?

Mr. WATT. — I am not sufficiently acquainted with the provisions of the Naval Defence Act to give an answer to that question, but will endeavour to ascertain the facts.

### TRANSPORTATION DELAYS, MELBOURNE TO PERTH.

Mr. GREGORY.—In view of the great delay that has taken place in the freightage of perishables between Melbourne and Perth, will the Minister for Works and Railways see if it is possible to expedite transport?

Mr. GROOM.—The goods to which the honorable member refers are transported over no fewer than four railway lines, with three different gauges. The matter was brought under the notice of the Railways Commissioner, who made inquiries and received a report. Representations have been made to two of the States concerned, with a view to expediting the transit of goods. So far as the Commonwealth line is concerned, the goods are carried with as much expedition as is possible in the circumstances.

Mr. GREGORY.—Eighteen days is too long.

Mr. GROOM.—The Commonwealth is not responsible for any delay.

### POSTAL ELECTRICIANS.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Has the Acting Prime Minister any statement to make public with reference to certain postal electricians about whom he gave me an interview, and in respect of whose employment it is contended that Mr. Fisher,

when Prime Minister, made a fairly definite promise to the House?

Mr. WATT.—In accordance with the undertaking I gave the honorable member in an office interview late last week, I instructed the Department to ransack the records to find out exactly what the promises of former Administrators, including Mr. Fisher, were. Just before I came into the House, I received a *précis* of the case, which I shall be glad to show to and discuss with the honorable member.

### REPATRIATION OF TROOPS.

Mr. RODGERS.—Will the Acting Prime Minister say whether the welcome statement that all our troops are likely to embark for Australia by the end of July includes the soldiers in Egypt, many of whom have been there for four years, while others who have hardly been two years abroad have returned home?

Mr. WATT.—I have been inquiring into that matter to-day. It was submitted to me for consideration by some other good folk. I have just received a reply from the Defence Department which indicates, at first blush, that the difficulties with regard to Egypt have been special. The date of enlistment meant priority of return in the Old Country, where there were vast numbers of men; but that system could not be operated in quite the same way for the Egyptian or Mesopotamian troops. It appears that the Department therefore adopted, on the advice of the highest organizing authority, the unit embarkation theory, which, I think, will keep some of the troops in Egypt away a little longer than some of the troops in England. I understand that there are about 9,000 men, all told, in Egypt at the present time.

Mr. RODGERS.—They feel they have a great grievance.

Mr. WATT.—That is natural, when they see their brothers-in-arms passing through the Canal, or getting home round the Cape, a little earlier. The conditions of shipping, however, have to be considered. I do not know whether the policy adopted is a reasonable one or not; but I shall confer with the Minister upon the subject.

### SURPLUS BRITISH MILITARY STORES.

Mr. KELLY.—Will the Assistant Minister for Defence get into touch at once with London and see if the accounts we are receiving of the destruction of British military property in France applies to light railway lines and similar gear that could be utilized in Australian development? If they do, will he urgently press on the Imperial authorities the desirability of ascertaining whether any of this material could be saved for the benefit of the Commonwealth?

### NEWCASTLE MILITARY CAMP.

Mr. WATKINS.—Will the Assistant Minister for Defence lay on the table of the Library all military papers connected with the removal of the Military Camp at Newcastle.

Mr. WISE.—I shall ask the Acting Minister for Defence to do so.

### AREA OFFICERS.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Complaint has been made to me that youths are still engaged in drilling our cadets. Will the Assistant Minister for Defence ascertain whether it is not now possible to allot this work to members of the Australian Imperial Force who have returned from the Front?

Mr. WISE.—I shall look into the matter, and advise the honorable member later on.

### EXHIBITION OF SOLDIERS' WORK.

#### HAND-WOVEN TWEEDS.

Dr. MALONEY.—Will the Acting Prime Minister allow samples of the Anzacs' hand-woven Australian tweeds to be added to the splendid exhibition of the work of returned soldiers now on view in the Queen's Hall? My reason for asking this question is that some influence seems to be at work to prevent the advancement of the men engaged in this particular industry.

Mr. WATT.—I know that the honorable member takes a deep interest in the Anzac tweed problem, and has done all that he can to help the movement. I see no objection to his suggestion, and will confer with the Minister for Repatriation (Senator Millen), who, I believe,

was responsible for the exhibition, in order to ascertain whether the proposed addition can be made to it.

### DISTRIBUTION OF WAR TROPHIES.

Mr. PALMER.—Will the Assistant Minister for Defence take into consideration the claims of every country district to participate in the distribution of war trophies when such distribution is made?

Mr. WISE.—I shall have inquiries made into the matter, and advise the honorable member.

### GERMAN REPARATION TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. HIGGS.—Is the Acting Prime Minister sufficiently acquainted with the Peace terms to be able to inform the House how much Australia will get from Germany by way of reparation? If he has not that information, is the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) keeping it back until he returns?

Mr. WATT.—Had the honorable member concluded his question in the way in which he opened it—with that courtesy which so embarrasses this side—I should have given him a very pleasing answer; but I think this question comes very ill from a man who advocated "no indemnity."

Mr. HIGGS.—In my question, I spoke not of "indemnity," but of "reparation."

Mr. WATT.—It is the same thing. Speaking seriously, however, the Government do not know what indemnity, if any, Australia will receive. As soon as the Prime Minister knows, we shall know, and as soon as we are permitted to tell the House and the country, we shall do so.

### REPATRIATION OF NURSES.

Mr. PIGOTT.—I desire to ask the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation whether the privileges extended to our returned soldiers, including those in relation to land settlement, will be extended to nurses who have served at the Front?

Mr. GROOM.—I think there is on the business-paper a question dealing with the matter, the answer to which will



satisfy the honorable member. May I add that in future the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton) will answer questions on behalf of the Minister for Repatriation (Senator Millen).

#### FEDERAL CAPITAL.

Mr. WEST.—I wish to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the agitation that has been going on in regard to a commencement of work at the Federal Capital has made any impression upon him or the Government, and whether the Government intend to observe the constitutional requirement that the Seat of Government shall be in New South Wales, and not less than 100 miles from Sydney?

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member has really put to me two questions, and I shall answer them separately. The "agitation," which has been properly named by him, has been brought under the notice of the Government, and, with respect to myself, has caused a very deep and lasting feeling of depression. As to whether the Government intend to observe the constitutional requirement, I can only say that they would be recreant to their duty if they did not see that the Constitution and laws of this country, which they are sworn to administer, were given effect.

#### TARIFF POLICY.

##### SPEECHES BY PRIME MINISTER IN LONDON.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—In reference to certain speeches reported to have been made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in London—speeches in which he referred very pointedly to the domestic policy of the Imperial Government on Tariff matters—I desire to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether his chief speaks as the mouth-piece of the Commonwealth Government here, and to what extent his actions will dictate our Tariff policy for Australia?

Mr. WATT.—Again we have a double-barrelled question, such as the honorable member, it seems to me, always fires. The Government take full responsibility for the Prime Minister's utterances in London in respect of all matters. We could not, even if we desired to do so, dissociate ourselves from our share of that respon-

sibility. As to how far the cabled reports of the right honorable gentleman's utterances are correct, I have no means of judging. The policy of the Government on Tariff matters will be considered in full consultation with all the members of the Cabinet.

#### RETURNED SOLDIERS AND INCOME TAX.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I desire to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he will make provision to exempt from future taxation moneys derived from personal exertion by sailors and soldiers who served in the recent war?

Mr. WATT.—The question involves a principle of far-reaching importance, and I shall be glad to have it considered if the honorable member will give notice of it.

#### TELEPHONE CONNEXIONS IN COUNTRY DISTRICTS.

Mr. PIGOTT.—Great difficulty is experienced in country districts in securing connexion with local telephone exchanges because, we are told, of the want of wire. Will the Postmaster-General state when that difficulty will be adjusted?

Mr. WEBSTER.—As soon as wire is available.

*Later:*

Mr. PIGOTT.—The Postmaster-General has stated that country telephones will be installed as soon as the requisite wire is available. Will he inform the House when the wire will be available?

Mr. WEBSTER.—That information can be supplied only by those who are responsible for the manufacture of the wire. As soon as they supply the material to the Department the installation of country telephones will be proceeded with.

#### NORTH-SOUTH RAILWAY.

Mr. YATES.—In the Ministerial statement just read by the Acting Prime Minister, no reference is made to the building of the North-South Railway. I desire to ask the honorable gentleman whether the Government have forgotten the agreement made with South Australia in regard to that matter, or is it their intention at any time to honour it?

Mr. WATT.—Here we have another double-barrelled question. I do not know that the Government, being a collective body, have what is called a memory. Individuals, I believe, are given that by the Almighty.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Government certainly have no conscience.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member is now speaking of Governments with which he has been intimately connected, and not the present Administration. I would again ask my honorable friend, fresh from fields of service, and other places, not to pounce upon me with far-reaching questions of this kind. If he will give notice I will consider it.

### PROFITS ON CORN SACKS AND RABBIT SKINS.

Mr. TUDOR.—Will the Minister for Trade and Customs state whether it is correct, as reported in the press, that his Department intends to hand over to the Wheat Pool the profit of £100,000 made by the sale of corn sacks? If so, do the Government intend to hand back to the rabbit trappers the £250,000 which they made out of their transactions in rabbit skins?

Mr. GREENE.—The Government propose to take steps that will lead to the £100,000, made out of the wheat sacks, being refunded to the Wheat Pool. The circumstances under which the rabbit business was transacted make it practically impossible to do what the honorable member suggests. It is not practicable to trace to the men who actually caught the rabbits the various transactions in regard to the skins, and that is the only means by which we could make a refund to the trappers. Had it been possible no doubt the Government would have been very glad to do what the honorable member suggests.

### PRICE OF SUGAR.

Mr. WEST.—I desire to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs a question relating to what is termed "An Official Puzzle." I have here a telegram from Melbourne, published in the Sydney press, suggesting that an agitation has been started to prevent the Government remov-

ing the control of sugar. In this telegram it is stated that—

It was officially stated to-day that Java sugar was £30 a ton, and it cost £2 a ton to carry it to Australia. Sugar in the United Kingdom was quoted at about £57 a ton, and in America at £46 a ton. Therefore, it was stated, if the prices were repealed there would be every incentive to export sugar from Australia, leaving us with insufficient sugar supplies,

and thus sending up prices like a rocket. Is there any truth in the statement that the Minister is endeavouring to give further opportunities to the enemies of Australia to raise the price of sugar?

Mr. GREENE.—It is a little difficult to follow the honorable member, but I may say that there is in force, as between the Commonwealth and the Queensland Governments, an agreement under which we are obliged to purchase the whole of the sugar produced in Queensland for the next twelve months. I regret very much to say that the crop this year, as well as last year's crop, fell very much below anticipations, and that the probabilities are that there will be in Australia a serious shortage of sugar, the extent of which at present can only be guessed. Anticipating, however, from all the information we could obtain, that this shortage would occur, we entered into contracts, some considerable time ago, for the purchase of a very large quantity of sugar. That was before the market price had risen to anything like the figure at which it stands to-day. Whilst I am unable to promise that there will be no rise in the price of sugar during the next twelve months, by averaging the Australian sugar with the imported sugar which we are buying, I think I can definitely say that the increase in price will not be great. The control will be maintained as long as it is necessary, and as there is no possibility of anything of the nature suggested by the honorable member happening, so as to result in the exploitation of the Australian consumer, through any oversea agency.

### HOADLEY'S FACTORY SITE.

Mr. FENTON.—Will the Minister for Home and Territories lay on the Library table all papers in connexion with the leasing of the area known as Hoadley's



factory site, St. Kilda-road, which was required by the Repatriation Department?

Mr. GLYNN.—If the papers are available in my Department I will lay them on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The usual practice is for an honorable member to give notice of his intention to move that certain papers be laid upon the table of the House or the Library. If the Minister is agreeable, the motion, being unopposed, is taken as formal, and moved without debate, and the papers are then tabled accordingly. It would be better to adhere to the old practice which prevailed before the war.

#### IMPORTATION OF SHEEP DIP.

Mr. LECKIE. — Under what power has the Minister for Trade and Customs acted in regard to the prohibition of the importation of sheep dip? Was action taken under the War Precautions Act or under some provision of the Customs Act?

Mr. GREENE. — Amongst other questions upon the notice-paper in regard to this matter is one concerning the actual character of the prohibition. The answer to that question will disclose the information which the honorable member seeks, but when those questions are called upon I shall ask that they be postponed till to-morrow so that the complete information may be made available.

#### PROFITEERING.

Mr. HIGGS.—Will the Acting Prime Minister say whether the Government propose to take any action to prevent or punish profiteering?

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member, when he was in office, did very little in that direction, and I think profiteering was more rampant then than it is now. However, if the honorable member will give notice of the question he will receive an answer.

#### SOLDIERS' FINES.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Will the Assistant Minister for Defence say whether it is the practice of the Defence Department, when making final payments to discharged soldiers, to deduct the amount

of fines imposed on the men during their service abroad? If such is the practice, will the Government consider its discontinuance, in view of the great service rendered by our soldiers?

Mr. WISE.—I shall ask the Acting Minister for Defence to take the suggestion into consideration.

#### SALE OF FLANNEL.

Dr. MALONEY.—In order to prevent an opinion now held by many becoming universal, namely, that the proposed sale by the Defence Department of 235,000 yards of flannel is in the interest of the warehouse kings of Flinders-lane, and in view of the fact that this flannel was paid for by the people, will the Acting Prime Minister consider favorably the suggestion contained in a letter published in the *Age* on 24th June that arrangements should be made for the Red Cross societies to take orders from citizens for small quantities of flannel suitable for families at a fixed price?

Mr. WATT.—I know nothing, personally or officially, about the procedure adopted, or the object of the sale of this flannel; but I will convey the honorable member's suggestion to the Acting Minister for Defence, and ask him to consult with the Business Board.

#### WAR INDEMNITY.

Mr. LISTER.—Assuming that a war indemnity is paid to Australia, will the Government give consideration to allocating portion of the money for the following purposes:—(a) To relieve from the necessity of paying rent under the Commonwealth housing scheme any widow who remains such, or any person who was entirely dependent on a deceased soldier; (b) to augment the pensions of blind or totally incapacitated soldiers; and (c) to pay the interest for a period of five years on loans granted by the Repatriation Department to soldier settlers and others embarking in business?

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member might well give notice of that question. At this moment, I can only say that before we can cook our hare we must catch it. We must make sure that we shall get some indemnity before we proceed to allocate it.

## OLD-AGE AND INVALID PENSIONS.

Mr. CHARLTON.—In view of the great increase in the cost of living, do the Government propose to increase the old-age and invalid pensions?

Mr. WATT.—The financial proposals of the Government are at present under consideration, and will be presented in the Budget.

## WHEAT POOL PAYMENTS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

If he can inform the House—(1) Whether the 1915-16 Wheat Pool will be finally cleaned up at an early date; (2) as to the prospect of an early dividend from pools 1916-17, 1917-18, and 1918-19?

Mr. WATT.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. The question of winding up the 1915-16 Pool was dealt with at the conference of the Australian Wheat Board held last month. It was agreed that this could not be done until returns had been received which would enable an estimate to be made of the profits yet to be received from the British Wheat Commission on account of diversion of cargoes shipped under the 3,000,000 tons contract.

2. The question of further payments on 1916-17 and 1917-18 account was also considered, and the growers' representatives on the Board have since published a statement that, taking into consideration the present position of finance, shipping, and stocks, they are satisfied that nothing at the present time can be done in that direction. It is impossible to say when a further payment will be made.

As regards 1918-19, there is no prospect of any further payment at an early date.

## RIVER MURRAY WATERS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works and Railways, *upon notice*—

1. Whether any definite decision has been arrived at to construct further locks on the River Murray at an early date?

2. If so, will the Minister state the localities decided upon and the approximate date of the commencement of the work?

Mr. GROOM.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. The River Murray Commission recently approved, with certain reservations, of the designs and estimates submitted by the constructing authorities for New South Wales and Victoria in connexion with the weir and lock on the River Murray at Torrumbarry, near Echuca.

Approval, with similar reservations, has also been given to the designs and estimates submitted by the constructing authority for South Australia in respect of locks Nos. 2 (at 225½ miles), 3 (at 269 miles), and 9 (at 479 miles).

2. (a) Locations of the locks referred to are indicated in paragraph 1.

(b) A commencement has been made by the constructing authority for Victoria (on behalf of the constructing authorities for New South Wales and Victoria) with work on the weir and lock at Torrumbarry, and it is anticipated that work in connexion with the three South Australian weirs and locks referred to will be made at an early date.

3. The Commission has also authorized the construction, in accordance with designs and estimates submitted of the Upper Murray storage and the Lake Victoria storage.

4. Surveys and investigations are actively proceeding, with a view to the location of the sites for additional weirs and locks on the River Murray between Echuca and Wentworth, particularly that in the vicinity of the confluence of the Darling and the Murray Rivers.

## INVOICE VALUE OF IMPORTS.

Mr. GREGORY asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether his attention has been drawn to a circular issued by the Importers and Agents' Association of South Australia, in which the following appears:—"In a recent importation of goods specially made for the Australian market the manufacturer declared in his invoice that there could be no home consumption value for such goods, in spite of which the Department loaded the invoice 20 per cent. because the home consumption value was not shown?"

2. Is it a fact that Customs officers have been so instructed?

3. If so, under what power have such duties been imposed?

4. Have not the collections of such duties been declared illegal by His Honour Sir George Murray, sitting as a Court of Federal Jurisdiction?

Mr. GREENE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.

2. Yes; but see answer to question No. 3.

3. Section 216 of the Customs Act empowers the Collector to demand proof of value for duty of goods entered through the Customs. Pending receipt of such proof, he may detain the goods, or release them under section 42, on deposit of a cash security sufficient to protect the revenue.

4. No. His Honour Sir George Murray's decision dealt only with the question of the time at which the home consumption value should be determined. On appeal the judgment was reversed by the High Court.



## ARMY NURSES.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, upon notice—

Whether provision has been made for special allowances to be paid to nurses who have served abroad to continue their studies at hospitals in special branches of training?

Mr. GROOM (for Mr. POYNTON).—Under the Repatriation Act, members of the Army Medical Corps Nursing Service are regarded as Australian soldiers within the meaning of that Act, and are, therefore, entitled to the advantages of the training facilities provided.

## SUPPLY BILL (No. 1) 1919-20.

FINANCE: REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE: PUBLIC DEBT PER CAPITA PAYMENT TO STATES: INTEREST ON LOANS—PUBLIC SERVICE: ALIENS: APPEALS TO ARBITRATION COURT—MINISTER FOR DEFENCE: VISIT TO ENGLAND: DEMOBILIZATION: TREATMENT OF SOLDIERS ABROAD—EXPORT OF HIDES—INCREASED COST OF LIVING: DAIRY PRODUCTS: BREAD: CLOTHING: PROFITEERING: INTER-STATE COMMISSION'S REPORT—THE TARIFF: AUSTRALIAN SHEEP DIP: TELEPHONE TABLE SETS—REPATRIATION: EXHIBITION OF SOLDIERS' WORK: FURNITURE: LAND SETTLEMENT: INSUFFICIENCY OF PENSIONS — ECONOMY: BUREAU OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY: DR. GILRUTH: NAVAL BASES—THE WAR: TERMS OF PEACE: PAYMENTS BY GERMANY—GENERAL ELECTION — MINISTERIAL CAUCUS RESOLUTIONS—POSTAL ADMINISTRATION: TELEGRAPH FORMS: UNIFORMS—AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE EDUCATION SCHEME — WEEVIL IN WHEAT—INVALID AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS—EIGHT-HOURS' DAY PROCESSION AND UNION JACK—USE OF RED FLAG—INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

*In Committee of Supply (Consideration of Governor-General's Message):*

Mr. WATT (Balaclava—Acting Prime Minister and Treasurer) [4.25].—I move—

That there be granted to His Majesty for or towards defraying the services of the year 1919-20, a sum not exceeding £4,337,335.

In asking for temporary Supply, it is proper that I should give the Committee a brief indication of the general financial position of the Commonwealth. I shall deal first with War Loan Finance.

The seven war loans raised by the Commonwealth within Australia brought in a total of £188,432,040. To this must be added receipts from the sale of War Savings Certificates, £5,140,513. The total amount, therefore, raised in Australia was £193,572,553. We borrowed direct from the British Government £47,500,000. The British Government further paid for the maintenance of Australian troops overseas, and for their munitions £70,645,000, but of this last amount Australia has repaid £26,000,000, leaving the amount due to Great Britain for the payments at £44,645,000.

The amount borrowed altogether consequently totals £285,717,553. The Treasurer had on hand on the 31st May unexpended war loan moneys amounting to £24,176,449. Deducting this from the total borrowed, it will be seen that the war loan expenditure to the 31st May last has been, approximately, £261,541,104.

Although the Armistice was signed seven months ago, there has not been any diminution of the expenditure directly borne by the Commonwealth, out of loans. Disbursements on munitions have certainly disappeared, but as the cost was being met temporarily by the British Government, the Commonwealth Treasury has not yet felt relief. On the contrary, large payments for transports and deferred pay have increased the drain from the Treasury. Demobilization is expected soon to be complete, and then the war payments in respect to soldiers still in khaki will be reduced to comparatively small proportions. Some hospital expenditure, however, will be required for a considerable time.

Although the payments referred to may be expected to rapidly diminish in the near future, the repatriation effort will necessitate the raising of further loans. At the Premiers' Conference of January last, the Commonwealth agreed to lend to the States sums of money aggregating over £30,000,000 to enable them to carry out a programme of settling 20,000 returned

soldiers on the land. The payments under the War Service Homes Act are likely also to reach a large figure, but the amount cannot at present be indicated even roughly. Sustenance payments will also require considerable funds. With the heavy expenditure in prospect, it will be necessary before long to raise another war loan.

Interest on the war debt now amounts to £13,170,000 per annum. Of that amount, there is payable to Australian lenders £8,560,000, and to the British Government £4,610,000. Difficulties of exchange, with which the financial and commercial community are well acquainted, have prevented payments which otherwise would have been made to the British Government in reduction of Australian indebtedness. We are not able at the present moment, and have not been able for some time, to transfer to London the interest which is due to Great Britain, and it has, consequently, been decided to establish a trust account in the Treasury to which will be credited about £2,000,000. This will enable the interest to be charged to the present year's accounts that should properly carry it, and to be held in the Treasury until exchange becomes available. This difficulty is receiving attention in the Treasury, and I hope will soon be removed.

The total annual recurring charge at present upon the Consolidated Revenue in respect of the war may be set down as follows:—

Interest .. .. .	£13,170,000
Sinking fund of 10s. per £100 .. .. .	1,200,000
War pensions .. .. .	5,050,000
Repatriation (say) .. .. .	2,000,000
	<hr/>
	£21,420,000

All these items may be expected to expand for a year or two.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Ministerial supporters do not take much interest in this matter, I notice.

Mr. WATT.—They have such complete trust in the Government.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They did not show it at the latter portion of last session.

Mr. WATT.—Yes, they did; all but two or three who were infected by the virus of the honorable member. My

friend may take it from me that if he had been at the meeting of the party yesterday, he would have had no doubt on the point.

The total expenditure of the Commonwealth out of revenue in the financial year before the war was £23,160,000, including payments to the States. The war burden has thus almost doubled the payments out of revenue. The indemnity imposed by the Allies upon Germany may somewhat lighten this load, but, judging by present indications, any such payment to Australia will probably be spread over a long period of years, and will represent a comparatively small portion of our total cost of war. The Australian taxpayer must, according to my information and judgment, make up his mind to carry and liquidate the great bulk of Australia's war debt.

Mr. HIGGS.—Is not the Treasurer now giving information about the indemnity that he had just indicated he did not possess?

Mr. WATT.—I said that I spoke "according to my information and judgment." I think I am entitled to do so.

Mr. TUDOR.—How much is information, and how much judgment?

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member having had administrative responsibility ought to know how difficult it is to decide that matter.

The state of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Commonwealth is at present good. Customs and Excise receipts have greatly exceeded the amount which was anticipated before the armistice was signed.

Mr. RILEY.—That is due to the Minister for Trade and Customs!

Mr. WATT.—It is due to the fact that the Budget was produced in a period of war, and to the House having to provide for the conception of the war lasting till the end of the financial year. Direct taxation is also likely to be in excess of estimates. The Department is still issuing income and land tax assessment, and all the money will not be received before 30th June. When the accounts have been closed I expect that the expenditure will be below the estimates. On the whole, a satisfactory surplus may be



expected for the year which is now closing, though it is quite impossible at this stage to hazard a guess as to its size. As early as practicable in August the Budget statement for the new year will be presented to the House. Complete information as to the finances will then be available. During the first week of July, however, I hope to be able to lay on the table a statement giving the approximate receipts and payments of the Commonwealth in 1918-19 under the main heads. This will show as nearly as one can what the surplus is likely to be. This Supply Bill, though nominally for two months, really is for about a fifth of the year, because a pay-day for the Public Service occurs on 5th September, and it is necessary to provide funds for other services for a little longer than that. The total amount of the Supply asked is £4,337,335. Included in this, as will be seen from the Bill circulated last night, is £700,000 for Treasurer's Advance, which is required for the continuation of public works in progress and for unforeseen items generally.

Mr. HIGGS. — Was that arranged at the secret Caucus?

Mr. WATT. — I gave instructions for the Bills to be circulated last night.

Mr. HIGGS. — I notice you carried a vote of confidence in the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), and I wanted to know if that was necessary.

Mr. WATT. — I do not desire these exchanges. I do not see any necessity for a vote of confidence, though I am sure the honorable member would not object if honorable members desired to show their loyalty to their leader.

Mr. TUDOR. — Why did you carry a vote of confidence in Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook, and not in Senator Pearce?

Mr. WATT. — We were not dealing with Ministers discharging the duties of ordinary administration, but with men representing Australia at a Conference of the utmost importance to Australia.

In the first Supply Bill for the current year an amount of £1,000,000 was included under the head of Treasurer's Advance, but the officers of the Treasury advise me that £700,000 is likely to suffice for the present. To get a fair compari-

son with the total amount of the expenditure approved by the Parliament for the year 1918-19 it is necessary to deduct the £700,000 for Treasurer's Advance, £80,000 for refunds of revenue, and £1,452,000 for war expenditure payable out of revenue. After abstracting these sums, the amount in the Supply Bill is £2,105,335, which is rather less than one-fifth of the £11,207,860 granted by the Parliament for the comparable services in the year just ended. The £1,452,000 set down for war services is composed of the following items:—War pensions, £1,040,000; repatriation of Australian soldiers, £356,000; and other war services, £56,000. The Bill includes no new items. It is for ordinary services only, and the total is less than that which was provided for a similar period of the previous year.

Mr. MATHEWS. — Is there any chance of compelling the press to separate war expenditure from ordinary expenditure, so that the issue may not be clouded?

Mr. WATT. — All the efforts of the Government have been bent in the direction of informing the public of the difference between ordinary expenditure and war expenditure.

Mr. MATHEWS. — The press will not do it.

Mr. WATT. — The press has been refusing to do a lot of things lately, and the Government have had to take their own course with the press. The honorable member is not more in love with the press than I am myself; and recently I felt it my duty to shut the press out of the public Departments for a considerable time. This was not with the object of getting the press to criticise the Government less, but in order to insure that official statements of facts or policy were published as they were uttered, and not manipulated to suit some organs. As I have said, there is nothing extraordinary or new in the expenditure under this Bill, and I think I have given honorable members enough material to enable them to compare the items for the corresponding period of this year and the coming year for which we are providing Supply. Having given the assurances I have, I think I am justified in asking that this Supply be granted by the Committee. I

have only to add that the Government have no desire to rush this Bill through either House. We realize quite clearly that the Committee of Supply in either House is entitled to reasonable time for discussion after so long a recess. The only reservation I make is that we desire to be able to pay war pensions constantly falling due and wages commitments, the first of which the Treasury officers tell me will fall due on Wednesday, the 2nd July. Within that limitation I ask honorable members to discuss this Bill as freely as they desire, and any information which the Treasury or the Departments can afford will be freely given.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [4.45].—The Acting Prime Minister has given us something in the nature of an epitomized Budget speech, with the difference that we have not on this occasion the advantage of following him with a printed copy of his remarks. I think it is rather unusual that on the first day of meeting, after a lengthy recess, we should be asked to deal with a Supply Bill. I realize, however, that we cannot pay one penny in wages or pensions after the 30th June, even from Treasurer's Advance, without a measure of this kind, and this suggests that we ought to alter our system of finance so as to make certain moneys available, or call Parliament together earlier. Practically we shall have to curtail discussion in order to get this Supply Bill out of the way before the 2nd July, for, as matters stand, the measure ought to leave this House this week.

Mr. WATT.—So long as the Bill is passed by Wednesday night next it will suit.

Mr. TUDOR.—That means that the Bill must be out of this House this week; and, of course, we know that, with their numbers and the present Standing Orders, the Government, if they choose, could have it passed by 5 o'clock to-day. We remember how in the past honorable members opposite have religiously voted to shut up every member on this side on particular questions.

Mr. WATT.—That is not so.

Mr. TUDOR.—They shut me up on the Electoral Bill.

Mr. WATT.—We did not shut up honorable members opposite; we applied a self-denying ordinance to the whole House.

Mr. TUDOR.—I know all about that. We know that Government supporters have to keep quiet, or the Government Whip takes a hand.

Mr. WATT.—I wish they would keep quiet!

Mr. TUDOR.—This Supply Bill has been sprung on the House, and the first intimation I had of it was in the newspapers this morning.

There are many matters to which I should like to refer; for instance, I should like to see the report of Police Magistrate Barnet on the Public Service, in order to find out how much justification there was for the slanders that were uttered by many people in regard to the public servants. In one case the man concerned was an Australian, his parents were Australian, and his grandparents were British, and I am very anxious to see what the report has to say on this and other cases. I am also very desirous of seeing the report of the late Public Service Commissioner, Mr. McLachlan, in order to ascertain what suggestions he has to make. I understand from the press that the Government intend to take away from the public servants a right which they have enjoyed up to the present time. Parliament has seen fit to place public servants in the same position as all other workers in the community and give them the right to appeal to the Arbitration Court; and it would be very much regretted if that right were now to be taken away. I know it has been said that Parliament is the body to deal with this matter, but I know no body more unfitted to deal with wages and conditions. I am sure that the Acting Prime Minister will agree with me that it would be a great mistake to take away this right of appeal to the Arbitration Court.

Then we ought to have a report from the Government in connexion with the visit of Senator Pearce to England. I remember that at the Australian Natives Association banquet in Melbourne



the gentleman who proposed the toast of the Commonwealth Parliament made reference to the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) and also to the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce). Senator Millen said it was not right to blame the Minister for Defence, and that if there was any responsibility in connexion with his visit to London, it rested with the Government. I went further, in replying to the same toast, and pointed out that, on the last day on which Parliament sat last year, there was a meeting of the Government party upstairs, and the party agreed that Senator Pearce should go to London. The responsibility, therefore, was upon the whole party for the visit of Senator Pearce, his wife, and family to Great Britain to do certain work.

Mr. PIGOTT.—I never heard of it.

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member could not have been at the meeting. It was towards the end of the year. The honorable member for Bass (Mr. Jensen) delivered his speech one night, and the next day, or the day after, we wound up. We were here until about 1 or 2 in the morning, and during that day there was a party meeting upstairs where the matter was mentioned. Every member of the party, including the honorable member for Calare (Mr. Pigott), is as much responsible for Senator Pearce going away as Senator Pearce is himself.

Mr. PIGOTT.—I am not.

Mr. FLEMING.—And I am sure I am not.

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Fleming) is also responsible as a member of the party.

Mr. WATT.—The Government will take the responsibility; in fact, we reach out after it. It is ours.

Mr. TUDOR.—There is no particular reaching out after the responsibility in this matter. Every member of the Government, and every member of the Ministerial party, is responsible for what was done. The honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) is as much responsible for Senator Pearce and his wife and family going overseas as is the Acting Prime Minister himself.

Mr. PIGOTT.—Did not Mr. Ryan and his wife and family go to England?

Mr. TUDOR.—I am saying nothing about the visit of Senator Pearce except to point out that the responsibility is not on Senator Pearce, but on the party to which he belongs. The honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser), or the honorable member for Calare (Mr. Pigott) may refer to State politicians having gone. I do not complain, but I candidly admit that, when I went to the Old Country, my only regret was that I could not work my passage. I had to pay for it. I had the opportunity of going and working in the Old Country—an opportunity that every Australian should avail himself of if he gets the chance.

Mr. WATT.—You are trying to benefit the Government party by giving them a share of the responsibility. We do not want them to carry it.

Mr. TUDOR.—They will have to do so.

Mr. FLEMING.—I know one who will refuse.

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member cannot remain a member of that party and refuse his share of it. I asked this afternoon across the table, why, in the resolution carried yesterday afternoon at the Ministerial party meeting applauding Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook for doing good work in England, Senator Pearce's name was not mentioned. The honorable member for Robertson knows a little of the work of the Defence Department over there, and of demobilization proceedings, and I should like to hear him say whether demobilization is not proceeding more harmoniously now, and whether Senator Pearce has impeded the work over there.

Mr. FLEMING.—I think Mr. Hughes is doing it, and was doing it, as well as it could be done.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then why send over a fifth wheel of the coach to do the work?

Mr. CORSER.—Has Mr. Hughes been in London the whole time?

Mr. TUDOR.—I have already said that I believe in Australia being governed from Australia, and not from London. I was glad to hear that our boys will all be leaving England by the end of next month, and that we shall soon have an opportunity of welcoming

them back. I am sure we all rejoice to know that peace is once more with us, and that the ingenuity of man will be devoted to the purpose of saving life instead of destroying it. I hope we shall be able to welcome our men back in the very near future.

Many matters should be referred to in discussing this Bill. One is the tremendous increase in the cost of living. No matter what Government is in power, it will have to deal with that question. Recently the Government lifted the embargo on the export of hides. The people who were holding hides in Australia would not sell them. Before the war the very best hides that Australia could turn out, which are some of the best in the world, were less than 1s. per lb. The price was then fixed at 1s. 1½d., but directly the embargo was lifted it jumped up to 1s. 8d. The farmer has obtained no advantage from that, because the hides were in store here; and it was estimated that over 1,000,000 hides were held by the speculators and the big killing companies of Australia. They are the people who made the profit on those hides, but the people of Australia have to pay. We are anxious that the very best should be done for Australian industries. We have here the material to turn those hides into leather. We have the bark and the grease. We have the hides and the labour, and every one will admit that Australian leather made a name for itself during the recent war; but, instead of the work being done here, we are going to send away the hides and the tanning materials, and deprive our own people of the work. To take the embargo off the export of hides was not a statesmanlike action. It would have been far better to keep them in Australia to create labour for our people.

Mr. PIGOTT.—Were any of the hides exported?

Mr. TUDOR.—I understand so.

Mr. PIGOTT.—I understand not.

Mr. TUDOR. — The Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Greene) can give us information on that point. If they were not exported, it means that their price was artificially inflated. We

are told that, instead of the prices of commodities going down, they are likely to increase. This means, then, that the value of land is to increase, the value of cattle will increase, the values of commodities will increase, but the value of human life will be less. I shall never subscribe to a policy which means that the life of any individual in this community is to be counted second to the life of a beast, or to the value of a piece of land. The lives of human beings should be valued higher than commodities or land or beasts.

Mr. PIGOTT.—What has that got to do with the argument?

Mr. TUDOR.—We are told that the dairy farmer is to get more for the stuff which he produces. That means that the cow is going to be more valuable, and human life less valuable.

Mr. PIGOTT.—More valuable for its hide?

Mr. TUDOR.—I am speaking of the stuff that is produced, as the honorable member will realize when he catches up to my argument. This or some other Government must take control on the question of the cost of living. The people who are manipulating the commodities that are absolutely essential to human life are reaping enormous profits. I have no doubt that even better opportunities will offer for the discussion of this important question in the debate on the Ministerial statement than on the Supply Bill.

Let me give one illustration on the question of the cost of living. Bread to-day is dearer in Australia than it has been probably for forty years. Forty years ago you could get a 4-lb. loaf for what a 2-lb. loaf costs to-day. The wages of the people who are producing the article have not made all that difference. During the past three or four weeks bread has gone up in Melbourne by ½d. per 2-lb. loaf, and this increase is attributed to the increase of the wages of the bread carters.

Mr. GREGORY.—Do you think the master bakers are making bigger profits than they did in the old days?

Mr. TUDOR.—I know the master bakers have such a monopoly that they



could really make the people of Melbourne pay what they liked. The wages of the bread carters have gone up 5s. per week, but the price of bread, which these men deliver, has gone up at the rate of 50s. per week.

Mr. GREGORY.—Were there as many restrictions in the employment of labour in those days?

Mr. TUDOR.—Not that I know of. A recent law case showed that it was impossible for a customer to transfer his patronage from one master baker to another. The proprietor of a café in Melbourne had left baker "A" and gone to baker "B." The case was taken to the committee of the master bakers organization, and the customer was compelled to go back to baker "A." Baker "A" can supply any sort of bread that he likes, and his customers are not allowed to leave him. That is one of the results of that employers' union, the Master Bakers Association.

Mr. GREGORY.—Those are combinations that ought to be suppressed.

Mr. TUDOR.—Yes, and a lady who was a member of the association, in Parkville, was fined £50 because she broke its rules. In my own district the Civil Service Co-operative Bakery—the largest in Victoria, and one of the largest in Australia—was refused flour by the millers. The case was taken to Court under the War Precautions Act, and the millers, who defended the case, were fined £50. They were a firm that admitted a few years ago that they had lost £6,000 worth of flour sacks, and did not know that they had lost them, so they must have been making enormous profits. Although the defendants gave notice of appeal, they did not appeal, because they did not want these things shown up to the public. These are the things that are increasing the cost of living. In the *Age* of the 14th inst. a paragraph was published stating that the new determination of the Bread Carters Wages Board, which was to come into operation on the 21st inst., had been discussed at a meeting of bread carters. A resolution expressing dissatisfaction with the determination was passed, and it was decided to refer the matter to a conference of the bread cart-

ers and bakers' societies, then in session at the Trades Hall. It was said that while the master bakers had raised the price of bread by  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. all round, and were reaping a considerable profit on the transaction, only twelve firms were paying the increased wages. A letter appeared about a week before stating that the price of bread was increased from 7d. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per 4-lb. loaf on the 30th of the previous month, the reason given being the increase of wages. The wages increase was not to take effect until the 21st inst., but the price of bread was increased three weeks before that. This is the sort of thing that is giving rise to the continual industrial unrest. I told a gathering of the Chamber of Manufactures that I was not surprised at the existence of industrial unrest, and that the only thing that surprised me was that there was not more of it. How some of the women manage to maintain their families on the weekly wages coming into their homes, I am at a loss to know. When the price of bread was increased from 7d. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per loaf on the 30th ultimo, the reason given was that the wages of the operative bakers had recently been increased, and that on 21st inst. further increases of wages would have to be paid to the breadcarters. The combined increases to bakers and carters range from 14s. to 17s. per week; but on the average load of 140 loaves the increase in the price of bread would amount to 5s. 10d. per cart per day, or 40s. 10d. per cart per week. This, it is pointed out, is a very impressive illustration of the ratio in which the public are made to pay for increased costs in the baking trade.

Mr. GREGORY.—Does the honorable member say that the master bakers are making too much money?

Mr. TUDOR.—I say they had no right to increase the price of bread before the increase in the wages of the breadcarters actually took place.

Mr. GREGORY.—How would the honorable member remedy the position?

Mr. TUDOR.—The Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) has said that the Government have abandoned the policy of price fixing, and that the matter will

have to be dealt with by the State Governments.

Mr. GREGORY.—If they would make all combinations illegal, well and good.

Mr. TUDOR.—Power should be given to one Parliament in Australia to deal with the whole question of the illegality of combines. We know that when combinations were practically made illegal in the United States of America, the various trusts took steps to secure their incorporation in the State of New Jersey, where they could practically flout the Federal law. If we have to wait until action is taken by the slowest State in Australia to deal with these matters, then Australians will be waiting a long time for the redress of their grievances.

Mr. GREGORY.—The law in regard to secret commissions was quickly observed.

Mr. TUDOR.—But the particular question with which I am now dealing affects the life of the people far more closely than does that of secret commissions. All classes in Australia to-day are suffering because of the increase in the cost of living. Mr. Knibbs has published statistics as to increases in house rents and the prices of groceries, which are very important items; but there are others that have not been touched. Take, for instance, the increase in clothing, which has been more pronounced than in respect of any other necessity.

Mr. WEST.—The price of some classes of boots has increased by 300 per cent.

Mr. TUDOR.—I do not know that they have increased to that extent; but I am informed by tailors that to-day they are paying £1 per yard for cloth which they could buy before the war for 5s. per yard. A suit of clothes which in pre-war days cost £4 4s., now costs £8 8s.

Mr. GREGORY.—The position is the same in England.

Mr. TUDOR.—We are told that if the people of other countries are suffering we ought not to complain.

Mr. FENTON.—We have the raw material here.

Mr. TUDOR.—But our woollen industry has not yet reached the stage at which it can supply the whole of our woollen requirements.

Mr. CORSER.—It would if we had Protection.

Mr. TUDOR.—When I was Minister for Trade and Customs my honorable friend was constantly complaining that I failed to do this and that in regard to the Tariff. That was nearly three years ago, but since his party has been in power he has been as silent as an oyster with respect to Tariff matters.

Mr. CORSER.—That is all the honorable member knows about the matter.

Mr. TUDOR.—I cannot speak of what takes place at the Ministerial party meetings upstairs.

Mr. CORSER.—What opportunities have there been to deal with the matter in the House?

Mr. TUDOR. — Three years ago my honorable friend said that Walkers Limited, the big engineers of Maryborough, Queensland, were absolutely crippled because I would not take action to give them increased protection. That company apparently is still going on, but my honorable friend has not urged the present Government to do what he said should have been done by the Government of which I was a member. He will have an opportunity to-day to tell the Ministry what they ought to have done before now in respect of Tariff matters.

I wish now to refer to the splendid exhibition of the work of returned soldiers which we have in the Queen's Hall to-day, and especially to the exhibition of furniture made by returned soldiers, which work is certainly first class. I would remind honorable members of a case reported in the press about a fortnight ago, where the Repatriation Department, through one of its local committees, voted to a returned soldier a sum of £35 with which to purchase furniture. It was alleged that the returned soldier was swindled by those from whom he made his purchase, and that the furniture obtained by him was of Chinese manufacture. Is it not absurd to teach some of our returned soldiers how to make furniture when we allow others to purchase Chinese furniture out of advances made by the Department? It should be laid down by the Repatriation Department that as long as returned soldiers



are making furniture no part of any advance made to a returned soldier shall be used for the purchase of furniture of Chinese manufacture. Our own men are making furniture superior to anything turned out by the Chinese of Melbourne or elsewhere. This is not a party question, and I hope it will receive the attention of the Repatriation Department.

Mr. FLEMING. — We all agree with what the honorable member has just said.

Mr. GREGORY.—The Department did see to the matter. It was only one of those blunders which will sometimes occur.

Mr. TUDOR.—It does not happen to be the only blunder made by the Department, and, so far as I am aware, there is nothing to prevent a recurrence of the incident.

I exceedingly regret that we are called upon to discuss this measure without being afforded time to consider it. This is practically the first occasion on which a Supply Bill has been brought down on what is really the first day of a new session, and members have been called upon to proceed at once with its consideration. We have already had a Ministerial statement covering seven or eight pages of printed matter.

Mr. McDONALD.—Is that not enough?

Mr. TUDOR.—Quite enough. May I express my pleasure that the honorable member for Kennedy (Mr. McDonald) is well enough to be with us again. I am sure we all hope that he will soon be restored to perfect health, so that he may again take a vigorous part in our debates. Superimposed upon the Ministerial statement we have had from the Treasurer in connexion with this measure a semi-Budget statement, and we are asked to deal with it without being afforded an opportunity to assimilate the figures. We are asked to pass in two and a half days a Bill providing for an expenditure of some £4,300,000. Within these two and a half days we are to deal, not only with this proposed expenditure, but with the various problems that have arisen during the six months that we have been in re-

cess. That is the only time allowed us by the Government to deal with such questions as the industrial unrest which now prevails, profiteering, and the steps which should be taken to put it down, as well as other important subjects which we must have an opportunity to consider.

Mr. HIGGS (Capricornia) [5.15].—The procedure adopted by the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) is unusual. The honorable gentleman should have consented to an adjournment of the debate in order to give honorable members an opportunity to examine the Supply Bill, and to consider the financial statement made by him, more especially as we have nothing before us to enable us to thoroughly grasp its purport. It is difficult at any time to follow the honorable gentleman when he is dealing with an array of figures covering our receipts and expenditure, and it is to be regretted that on this occasion he has not circulated a financial statement which we might compare with the last Budget statement made by him.

We have every reason to complain of the brutal tactics of the Ministerialists, who have a majority of two to one in this Chamber, and who refused to permit us any time to discuss the Estimates other than the few hours between 11.20 a.m. on one day and 4.30 p.m. on the following day. That was the attitude they adopted towards us, notwithstanding that the Estimates covered an expenditure of some £120,000,000. The Estimates relating to some of the Departments, indeed, were not allowed to be discussed. I do not think it is too late even now to refer to the way in which the Treasurer brought in his Estimates. The method adopted was entirely new, since the Estimates as submitted, instead of giving us the actual expenditure of the previous year, simply compared the Estimates for the current financial year with the Estimates of the previous year. Formerly we had had the actual expenditure for the previous year side by side with the Estimates for the period under review. Such a method, in my opinion, tends only to confuse the House. I should have preferred to see the Treasurer bring forward his Esti-

mates of revenue in this way, although with greater detail:—

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE FOR YEAR ENDING  
30TH JUNE, 1919.

Customs and Excise .. ..	£12,050,000
Increased Customs and Excise taxation .. ..	1,985,000
Post Office, telegraph, and telephone .. ..	6,000,000
Postage war tax .. ..	516,000
Land tax .. ..	2,000,000
Increased land tax .. ..	380,000
Income tax .. ..	7,400,000
Increased income tax .. ..	2,200,000
Succession duties .. ..	750,000
War-time profits tax .. ..	1,800,000
Entertainments tax .. ..	205,000
Increased entertainments tax .. ..	275,000
Commonwealth Government Line of Steamers—Surplus earnings .. ..	780,000
Coinage .. ..	200,000
Defence .. ..	220,000
Detained enemy vessels .. ..	1,675,000
Balance of Defence Trust Fund accounts .. ..	64,000
Patents .. ..	15,500
Trade marks, copyrights, and designs .. ..	5,000
Quarantine .. ..	15,000
Lighthouses and light dues .. ..	120,000
Capital Territory .. ..	28,000
Northern Territory (excluding Customs and Post Office) .. ..	43,000
Kalgoorlie-Port Augusta railway .. ..	216,000
Port Augusta-Oodnadatta railway .. ..	—
Darwin-Katherine River railway .. ..	50,000
Repayment of States' proportion of pensions .. ..	50,000
Contribution of officers to pensions under State Acts .. ..	3,000
Capital expenditure repayment account .. ..	15,000
Miscellaneous .. ..	573,770
<b>Total revenue .. ..</b>	<b>£39,634,270</b>

From this statement I have omitted the £20,000 of unexpended balances of London orders, and also the interest repaid by the States, viz., £836,230. I ask honorable members to read the Estimates of expenditure for the year ending the 30th

inst. under ordinary votes and appropriations, and excluding war services—

Governor-General .. ..	£24,110
Parliament .. ..	238,774
Prime Minister .. ..	204,921
Treasury—omitting invalid and old-age pensions and maternity allowances .. ..	507,576
Invalid and old-age pensions .. ..	3,925,000
Maternity allowance .. ..	634,000
Attorney-General .. ..	102,067
Home and Territories .. ..	209,176
Defence—Military .. ..	1,783,948
The Navy .. ..	1,632,886
Trade and Customs .. ..	796,354
Works and Railways .. ..	549,151
Postmaster-General .. ..	5,494,503
Northern Territory and Port Augusta-Oodnadatta railway .. ..	416,326
New works for all Departments .. ..	454,951
	<b>£16,973,743</b>
Payment to States under Surplus Revenue Act 1910 .. ..	6,351,250
Special payment to State of Tasmania .. ..	90,000
<b>Total expenditure, other than war, paid out of revenue .. ..</b>	<b>£23,414,993</b>
<b>War services, paid out of revenue .. ..</b>	<b>21,129,602</b>
<b>Total expenditure out of revenue .. ..</b>	<b>£44,544,595</b>

Deduct estimated receipts, £39,634,270, from estimated expenditure, £44,544,595, and we get a deficiency of £4,910,325, after allowing for the £5,356,000 which the Treasurer expects to obtain by new taxation.

The Treasurer partly made up that deficiency by taking the money set aside for Invalid and Old-age Pensions, £3,995,091, and balances brought from London, £800,000, making a total of £4,795,091. But he will not be able to draw on such reserves during the financial year 1919-20. In order to arrive at the total estimated expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1919, we must add to the estimated expenditure of £44,544,595 the amount of £78,914,809 paid out of loan for war services. This gives a total of £123,459,404. If we deduct from that the estimated receipts, £39,634,270, we have a probable deficit on the year's transactions of £83,825,134. Add



that to the public debt of the Commonwealth, viz., £272,022,072, and we get a total public debt of £355,847,206. I believe those figures are approximately correct, but they cannot be absolutely accurate, because the cessation of hostilities has already taken 150,000 soldiers off the pay sheets. But they show that there has been a very great increase in our public debt, and the Treasurer will have to meet an interest bill of not less than £16,000,000 for the year ending 30th June, 1920, apart altogether from any sinking fund to repay the loans.

I do not agree with the proposal of the Treasurer to rob the States of their *per capita* allowance of 25s., which we agreed to pay as compensation for the Federal authority taking all Customs and Excise revenue. The Treasurer proposes to reduce that payment by 2s. 6d. per head of population in each year, commencing in 1920-21, until the payment reaches 10s. in 1925-26. That *per capita* payment of 10s. is to continue for the succeeding five years, when it will be again reviewed by the Federal Parliament. It was in 1910 that Mr. Fisher, the then Treasurer, introduced a Bill to provide that the States should receive a *per capita* payment of 25s. for a period of ten years, and at that time the States were in great fear that the Commonwealth would rob them of a considerable amount of revenue. It is very easy for the Treasurer to propose to make good the deficiency which will arise through the war debt by reducing the *per capita* allowance to the States. But we must remember that the States have a great deal to do with their revenue. Many of the activities of the State authorities enter into the very heart of the social and domestic life of the community. There are many domestic Departments to be maintained, which were not included in the Commonwealth's thirty-nine articles. There are State Departments of Mines, of Agriculture, of Education, and of Charity. In Queensland the Charities Department is very comprehensive. Any unfortunate wife whose husband has deserted her is given by the Department assistance for the maintenance of herself and her chil-

Mr. Higgs.

dren. That is an allowance which ought to have been granted long ago by all the States.

Mr. WEST.—The maintenance of the children is provided for in New South Wales.

Mr. HIGGS.—There was a time in Queensland when a widowed mother who could not maintain her children was compelled to board them out. Now she can claim from the Charity Department an allowance for their maintenance. Similarly a deserted wife can obtain assistance for herself and her children, and there is a further provision for granting aid to the wife and children of a man who is ill and unable to earn a living. The Charities Departments of the States must be continued. If the Commonwealth could prove to the general public that it is expending money more economically than the States are doing, we might have some claim to reduce the payments to the States. But where can we point to any wise system of economy in our Federal expenditure?

Mr. GREGORY.—The expenditure has been riotous.

Mr. HIGGS.—Are we to take a couple of million pounds from the States each year and insist that they shall find some source of revenue other than the *per capita* allowance? I could mention a number of directions in which the Federal Government are wasting a great deal of money. Without any lawful authority they have commenced to expend a lot of money in connexion with a so-called Bureau of Science and Industry. The Government promised to make no appointments in connexion with that Bureau until the House had had an opportunity of considering the proposal. But I understand that Dr. Gilruth, who has been retired from the position of Administrator of the Northern Territory, has actually been sent on a trip abroad, and is to receive an appointment in the Bureau.

Mr. GREGORY.—Only during his absence abroad.

Mr. HIGGS.—With the approval of the Government he has been sent abroad by Dr. Gellatley, who, with all his ex-

perience as a journalist, and his qualifications as a financial editor, is not fitted to be a director of the Bureau of Science and Industry. He has commissioned Dr. Gilruth to inquire into the problem of nodules in beef.

Mr. GREGORY.—He is to receive only his travelling expenses.

Mr. HIGGS.—He is to receive a salary of £1,750 per annum.

Mr. GREGORY.—He will receive that in any case, because he is still on leave.

Mr. HIGGS.—But I understand that when he returns he will receive an appointment at £1,500 per annum in the Bureau of Science and Industry.

Mr. WEBSTER.—That is only a statement.

Mr. HIGGS.—Does the Postmaster-General deny it?

Mr. WEBSTER.—I have no knowledge of any such arrangement.

Mr. HIGGS.—Ought not that arrangement to have come before a Minister as a member of the Cabinet?

Mr. WEBSTER.—It has been before Cabinet, but no arrangement such as the honorable member has stated has been made.

Mr. HIGGS. The Minister said that he had no knowledge of the appointment.

Mr. WEBSTER.—Not of the amount the honorable member mentioned.

Mr. HIGGS.—The procedure has been most irregular, and indicates the extravagant way in which the Government deal with questions of this nature. The Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) will recollect that when he was a Minister in a Labour Government and appointments were brought before Cabinet the salaries were always mentioned. Why are the Government sending Dr. Gilruth abroad? Is the trip a solatium for his deprivation of the position in the Northern Territory, or do the Government think that they have so much money to dispose of that they may expend it in this extravagant fashion? We could easily refer to a score of other such items. Before the Government deprived the States of 2s. 6d. per head per annum, commencing in 1920-21, they ought to show that they are prepared to exercise a wise economy. I do not say

that they should start in wholesale fashion to throw large numbers of men out of employment.

Mr. MATHEWS.—That is what economy generally means.

Mr. HIGGS.—That policy would be a mistake. But there are ways in which the Government could save hundreds of thousands of pounds. They certainly could economize to a considerable extent in the proposed expenditure upon the Naval Bases. If the Allies' victory in the late war is to bring into being a new world, and we are to have the protection of a League of Nations—as I believe we shall have—what will be the use of expending hundreds of thousands of pounds on the creation of Naval Bases?

On the figures with which the Treasurer has supplied the Committee, I estimate that the Budget speech will show that we shall require nearly £16,000,000 to meet our interest bill, and that we shall be obliged to raise about £10,000,000 of new revenue in order to pay our way. Where is that money to be obtained? Are we to receive an indemnity of £120,000,000 from the Germans? I have heard rumours that the Acting Prime Minister is in possession of certain information; indeed, he almost admitted as much in the first part of his statement:—

Until the protracted deliberations of the Peace Conference were approaching finality, it was considered inadvisable to summon the Houses for the discussion of public business. Even now the information at the disposal of the Government as to the terms of peace is not sufficient to warrant the submission of the matter to Parliament, and it appears probable that it will have to await the return of the Australian representatives.

Those who know the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) know very well that if Australia is likely to get anything from the Germans he will keep it secret, if he possibly can, until he comes back. He will keep it "in the bag." The Acting Prime Minister almost suggested that there was a likelihood of something coming to Australia.

Mr. WEST.—The Prime Minister will be sure to bring something back with him.

Mr. HIGGS.—He will need to do so in order to justify the motion of confidence in him passed by the National party at



its Caucus meeting yesterday. If the terms of peace include the payment of reparation by the Germans to an amount which will cover war pensions it will account for £6,000,000; so that we shall only require to find about £4,000,000 of fresh money per annum in order to pay our way. If, however, there is no payment of that kind, the Government will need to get £10,000,000 or £11,000,000 from some source or other. Where do they propose to get it? For one thing, they propose to rob the States in order to get some of it. Are they going to increase the rates of the income tax, the probate duties, and the land tax? Or are they to have a "khaki" election, so that they may come back with a mandate giving them a free hand to do as they like—to tax the general public by way of certain duties on tea, kerosene, and so forth? There is a very strong impression abroad that there will be a general election as soon as the Prime Minister returns. The electoral officers have been instructed to speed up and get all the rolls ready, so that when he returns the Government can rush to the country. There is a general impression that they will even go to the country without dealing with the Tariff.

Mr. FENTON.—That will be suicide.

Mr. HIGGS.—They will go to the country as Protectionists. Their leader will do anything he thinks will enable him to score a victory. In any case, it will be suicidal to the electors if they remain in office for another nine months.

At its Caucus meeting the Nationalist party carried a motion expressing its pride at the admirable way in which the Government had carried out their administration. It was a very foolish thing for them to do. There are plenty of members of that party who do not believe that the Government have carried out their administration in an admirable manner. The honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser), who laughs, may believe in the motion which was carried, because the administration of the Government is in accord with his views; because he thinks that the public deserve all that they get. He really believes that everybody can become rich and prosper-

ous if he will only keep on the straight and narrow path, and that if the public have to pay high prices it is their own fault.

Mr. CORSER.—Can the honorable member suggest how prices may be reduced?

Mr. HIGGS.—It is not the duty of an Opposition to instruct the Government. Nevertheless, we have already furnished honorable members opposite with ideas. The best of their work has come from our programme. Shipbuilding, which is really the best thing the Government has done, was a plank of our programme which they appropriated or stole from us. They have also stolen our Postmaster-General from us.

Mr. TUDOR.—That is probably the best thing they have done.

Mr. HIGGS.—But they have spoiled him. To-day we see the effect they have had on him. He ought to be ashamed of the parsimony of his administration. When does he propose to do away with the ridiculous method of sending out telegraphic messages that now drive the public to desperation? People cannot open the messages. "Open from right to left" is the rule they are asked to observe.

Mr. WEBSTER.—The economy has effected a saving of £7,000!

Mr. HIGGS.—Well, the irritation it has caused must mean the loss of 7,000 souls. Look at the quality of the paper supplied for filling in telegrams. A person is supposed to write his name and address on the back of the form, but if he does so, he destroys the writing on the front. Consequently, the form has to be torn up, and a fresh one has to be filled in. On my travels, I have heard that the Postmaster-General has actually deprived the travelling post-office employees of their uniforms. These men have a difficult job to perform travelling during the night, and sorting letters, yet men who have been twenty years and thirty years in the service have been deprived of the privilege of having their old uniforms. The Postmaster-General has now issued to them the same uniform that telegraph messengers who have just entered the service are asked to wear.

Mr. WEBSTER.—The honorable member must be in a jocular mood to-day.

Mr. HIGGS.—I can assure the Postmaster-General I am not joking about the matter. I met a man in Queensland who was very distressed over it. I sympathized with him. He said, "I have been thirty years in the service, and have been deprived of the uniform I used to wear. I think I am entitled to that privilege." It is poor economy that the Postmaster-General is practising. A great deal of time is lost in saving pieces of string, and in writing on the backs of used envelopes, and a great deal more money is wasted in that way than if fresh string and fresh envelopes were used. I did not criticise the Minister during the war because I thought that he was trying to do his best in the way of exercising economy; but now that the war is over, and paper is cheaper, I think it would be wiser to consider the comfort of the people who make use of the post-office, and the personal pride of the departmental employees in the matter of uniforms.

Mr. WEBSTER.—Is the honorable member in favour of having them dressed in gold braid?

Mr. HIGGS.—I am in favour of the travelling post-office employees having the uniform which they wore prior to the raid the honorable gentleman made upon them recently in a spirit of false economy.

I have reason also to find fault with the Government for their treatment of the Queensland Government, which is trying to do so much for returned soldiers.

Mr. CORSER.—Oh!

Mr. HIGGS.—That is a most discourteous ejaculation on the part of the honorable member. Why does he meet with derision a remark which is absolutely true—that the Queensland Government are doing more than any other Government for returned soldiers?

Mr. CORSER.—Why do they not give the fee simple instead of perpetual leases?

Mr. HIGGS.—The honorable member compels me to give the schedule of farms which the Queensland Government has

set apart for their soldiers. It is as follows:—

#### LAND FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Settlement.	Area acres.	Total number who can be settled.
<i>Atherton.</i>		
Resumptions .. ..	12,884	208
<i>Brisbane.</i>		
Beerburum .. ..	51,000	250
Mt. Gravatt .. ..	548	61
Wolston .. ..	100	12
Enoggera .. ..	375	40
Terrors Creek .. ..	8,000	100
<i>Ingham.</i>		
Tully River and Banyan Creek	22,000	200
<i>Roma.</i>		
Mount Hutton .. ..	104,430	106
Cornwall .. ..	60,000	80
<i>Stanthorpe.</i>		
Pikedale .. ..	17,400	250
Between Pikedale and Thulimbah	12,000	250
<i>Toowoomba.</i>		
Cecil Plains .. ..	40,578	73
<i>Atherton.</i>		
Barron .. ..	700	2
Danbulla .. ..	2,885	18
Dirran .. ..	3,533	22
East Barron .. ..	250	25
Gadgarra .. ..	610	4
Malanda .. ..	288	2
<i>Banana.</i>		
Kianga .. ..	2,560	1
<i>Bowen.</i>		
Euri and Roundback .. ..	17,236	44
Pring .. ..	34	3
Crystal Brook .. ..	579	1
<i>Brisbane.</i>		
Beerwah .. ..	114	2
Bromelton .. ..	119	2
Byron .. ..	971	6
Cambrook .. ..	370	1
Canning .. ..	309	2
Conondale .. ..	273	2
Durundur .. ..	605	6
Kilcoy .. ..	124	2
Maleny .. ..	400	4
Maroochy .. ..	514	10
Moffat .. ..	7	1
Moggill .. ..	41	2
Mooloolah .. ..	44	2
Mudgeeraba .. ..	200	1
Redcliffe .. ..	108	14
Sahl .. ..	2,135	28
Samsonvale .. ..	643	13
Toorbul .. ..	160	1
Wararba .. ..	60	2



LAND FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT—*continued.*

Settlement.	Area acres.	Total number who can be settled.
<i>Bundaberg.</i>		
Barolin .. ..	101	1
Chin Chin .. ..	3,912	5
Gin Gin .. ..	152	1
Joanborough .. ..	846	3
Kalkie .. ..	72	9
Kolonga .. ..	2,098	3
Littabella .. ..	309	1
Mingo .. ..	60	1
Moolboolaman .. ..	889	2
Mungy .. ..	3,307	4
Tottenham .. ..	321	1
Walla .. ..	1,491	5

<i>Cairns.</i>		
Bellendenker .. ..	1,135	14
Cairns .. ..	424	14
Formartine .. ..	1,110	1
Garioch .. ..	890	3
Grafton .. ..	62	1
Sophia .. ..	96	1

<i>Charters Towers.</i>		
Millchester .. ..	120	1
Pentland .. ..	2,223	3
Ravenswood .. ..	1,280	2

<i>Clermont.</i>		
Colinby .. ..	1,280	1

<i>Dalby.</i>		
Dalby .. ..	273	1
Inglestone .. ..	4,442	2
Maida Hill .. ..	315	1

<i>Gayndah.</i>		
Auburn .. ..	1,347	3
Barabara .. ..	1,280	1
Cooranga .. ..	10,000	20
Darra .. ..	320	1
Dundar .. ..	625	3
Dykehead .. ..	1,280	1
Lochaber .. ..	329	1
Malmos .. ..	1,053	1
Mundubbera .. ..	193	1
Reid .. ..	160	1

<i>Gladstone.</i>		
East Stowe .. ..	187	1
Milton .. ..	8,600	67

*Mr. Higgs.*LAND FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT—*continued.*

Settlement.	Area acres.	Total number who can be settled.
<i>Goondiwindi.</i>		
Bengalla .. ..	3,000	
<i>Gympie.</i>		
Amamoor .. ..	635	4
Boonara .. ..	1,204	10
Brooloo .. ..	316	1
Brooyar .. ..	312	1
Glastonbury .. ..	230	2
Gutchy .. ..	395	1
Imbil and Kandanga .. ..	2,000	10
Kilkivan .. ..	2,656	12
Murgon .. ..	65	1
Noosa .. ..	52	1
Tuchekoi .. ..	314	2
Winderara and Boonimba .. ..	8,037	16
Widgee .. ..	279	1
Woondum .. ..	1,586	25

<i>Herberton.</i>		
Ravenshoe .. ..	494	4

<i>Ingham.</i>		
Trebonne .. ..	36	1

<i>Inglewood.</i>		
Arcot .. ..	615	1
Bonshaw .. ..	433	2
Coolmunda .. ..	794	4
Gunyan .. ..	8,527	14
Inglewood .. ..	165	3
Sands .. ..	640	2
Silver Spur .. ..	23,977	14
Warroo .. ..	8,000	8

<i>Innisfail.</i>		
Japoon .. ..	107	1
Johnstone .. ..	240	2

<i>Ipswich.</i>		
Avoca .. ..	17,000	17
Byron .. ..	433	1
Esk .. ..	18	1
Fassifern .. ..	336	3

<i>Mackay.</i>		
Howard .. ..	100	3
St. Helena .. ..	158	1

<i>Maryborough.</i>		
Glenbar .. ..	5,530	7
Gigoomgan .. ..	1,285	1
Miva .. ..	1,486	3
St. Mary .. ..	640	1

## LAND FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT—continued.

Settlement.	Area acres.	Total number who can be settled.
<i>Nanango.</i>		
Burrandowan .. ..	12,000	20
Bocie .. ..	292	1
Charleston .. ..	1,960	10
Cooyar .. ..	3,509	27
Cushnie .. ..	600	3
Lawson .. ..	2,240	7
Mondure .. ..	94	1
Neumgna .. ..	2,065	17
Okaden .. ..	602	1
Peroone .. ..	2,386	2
Taabinga .. ..	823	4
Tarong .. ..	915	9
Taromeo .. ..	4,552	42
Tureen .. ..	1,166	4
Wooreoolin .. ..	6,000	12

*Port Douglas.*

Salisbury .. ..	55	1
Whyanbeel .. ..	95	2

*Rockhampton.*

Bundalba .. ..	1,135	3
Bunerba .. ..	985	1
Calliungal .. ..	512	1
Calioran .. ..	6,660	27
Don .. ..	336	1
Duaringa East .. ..	793	2
Dundee .. ..	2,684	7
Faraday .. ..	4,594	15
Gelbara .. ..	3,600	7
Graycliffe .. ..	1,280	2
Langmorn .. ..	607	1
Limestone .. ..	1,596	8
Marlborough .. ..	6,077	24
Morinish .. ..	5,690	19
Nicholson .. ..	405	1
Rosalyn and Barmoya .. ..	3,500	30
Stoodleigh .. ..	15,000	75
San Jose .. ..	672	1
Stanwell .. ..	260	2

*Roma.*

Amby .. ..	7,548	6
Barabanbel .. ..	7,792	6
Orallo .. ..	875	1
Taboonbay .. ..	1,280	1
Umbarill .. ..	1,278	1
Waroonga .. ..	5,535	3

*Springsure.*

Ahakie .. ..	710	1
Cullin-la-ringo .. ..	1,277	1

## LAND FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT—continued.

Settlement.	Area acres.	Total number who can be settled.
<i>Stanthorpe.</i>		
Ballandean .. ..	870	10
Folkestone .. ..	2,201	27
Glenlyon .. ..	15,906	7
Jibbinbar .. ..	8,500	4
Maidenhead .. ..	5,882	5
Marsh .. ..	856	32
Mingoola .. ..	2,404	4
Mundubbermore .. ..	5,293	10
Stanthorpe .. ..	508	24
Tenterfield .. ..	480	2

*St. George.*

Gulnarbar .. ..	3,257	2
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*St. Lawrence.*

Long Hill .. ..	248	1
St. Lawrence .. ..	960	1

*Taroom.*

Cooaga .. ..	2,493	1
Wandoan .. ..	380	2

*Toowoomba.*

Cooyar .. ..	791	8
Domville .. ..	55	1
Drayton .. ..	498	2
Geham .. ..	30	1
Toowoomba .. ..	78	1

*Townsville.*

Abbotsford .. ..	851	1
Hinchinbrook .. ..	598	1
Jarvisfield .. ..	140	1
Magnetic .. ..	80	4
Scott .. ..	474	1

*Warwick.*

Canal Creek .. ..	1,280	1
Glengallan .. ..	1,394	9
Goomburra .. ..	1,147	9
Leslie .. ..	317	2
Palgrave .. ..	10,231	12
Rosenthal .. ..	65	1

## GRAND TOTAL.

Portions set apart for Soldier Settlement ..	2,826
Portions selected by discharged soldiers ..	684
Available for selection by discharged soldiers	2,142



## SUMMARY.

Total area of land in sundry districts as per List No. 1, 699,096 acres, divided into .. .. .	2,826 portions
Portions already selected by discharged soldiers .. .. .	684
Balance of portions available for allotment .. .. .	2,142
<i>Estimated Cost of Works—</i>	
(1) Railways .. £299,716	
(2) Roads, Bridges and Water.. 96,765	
(3) Surveys .. 19,183 5s. 6d.	
	£415,664 5s. 6d.

The **TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Charlton).—The honorable member's time has expired.

*No other honorable member rising,*

Mr. HIGGS.—I am much obliged to honorable members for giving me the opportunity of continuing my remarks at this stage; and I am pleased that the Treasurer is in the chamber because the Commonwealth Government have agreed to advance to the Queensland Government the moneys referred to in the schedule which I have just read.

Mr. WATT.—Up to the quota only.

Mr. HIGGS.—Is that quota not an arbitrary figure, which the Repatriation Department consider is the number of soldiers Queensland may be entitled to out of 20,000 who are expected to settle on the land?

Mr. WATT.—I will tell the honorable member how it was arrived at. The Australian estimate was essentially arbitrary, but after consultation with the State Governments, within the Australian estimate, the allocation was on the basis of enlistments.

Mr. HIGGS.—It is interesting to honorable members to know that out of 416,000 soldiers who enlisted it is expected that only about 20,000 will take up land—a very small percentage. In the old days we used to think there would be many thousands desirous of settling on the land. We in Queensland have reason to feel that the Commonwealth Government have not met us as it might have done in this matter. In addition to the schedule of 699,000 acres, the Queensland Government set apart in

Northern Burnett 1,487,704 acres, and in Callide Valley 1,074,522 acres. The estimated cost of the railway and other works to open up these two areas is—From Many Peaks to Monto, £610,000; Mundubberra to Monto, £320,000; Dawson Valley through Prairie to Monto, £400,000; a point between Prairie and Monto south-west, £90,000—a total of £1,420,000. The estimated cost of the road formations is, Northern Burnett, £146,770; and Callide Valley, £107,500. Of the resumptions of unexpired leases the estimated cost is, Northern Burnett, £105,240, and Callide Valley, £57,000; and of the surveys and so forth, Northern Burnett, £126,730; and Callide Valley, £87,150. The Commonwealth Government were asked to lend this money, and Mr. Hunter, the Queensland Minister of Lands, estimates that if these areas were opened up they would be capable of settling and maintaining 45,000 people. The honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser), I understand, suggests that a portion of the land is not suitable.

Mr. CORSER.—I say that expenditure on a line over a mountain is unwarranted when the same end can be reached without such expenditure.

Mr. HIGGS.—That is the honorable member's view.

Mr. CORSER.—It is the view of Queensland.

Mr. HIGGS.—The honorable member's district includes Maryborough, and it is desired to get all the traffic which would be caused by the opening up of these lands to go to Maryborough.

Mr. CORSER.—It is the hinterland of Maryborough and Bundaberg.

Mr. HIGGS.—It is not the hinterland of Maryborough. One of the great defects in Australia is that the people in certain centres want to monopolize all the trade and commerce; and Australia will never progress until we aim at decentralization, and settle people where they ought to be settled. I am surprised that an otherwise broad-minded man should throw such obstacles in the way of the construction of this railway; his is a parochial view unworthy of a statesman. Once this money is expended it

will bring settlement so much nearer to one of the best ports in Queensland, namely, the port of Gladstone. I approached the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) in this matter, and he referred me to Senator Millen, who wrote a letter in the following terms:—

With reference to your letter of the 15th instant, asking my views on a letter received from the Hon. W. G. Higgs on the subject of advancing a loan of £1,420,000 to the State of Queensland for the purpose of building certain railways, I have to advise that the arrangements made at the Premiers' Conference was that the Commonwealth should provide funds to the extent necessary for each State to make available its estimated quota of holdings for the soldier land settlement scheme, and this, I consider, fully meets the present requirements.

The Queensland proposals to the extent of their quota have already been approved, and the request of Mr. Higgs for consideration of a loan of £1,420,000 is in addition to the provision required for the Queensland quota.

This request really amounts to a proposal that the Commonwealth should finance Queensland for its ordinary public works policy, and, if such a request were agreed to, other States would naturally expect similar assistance; and I strongly urge, therefore, that the proposal be not entertained.

Later on, if a policy of immigration is adopted, it may be necessary to aid the States financially.

Mr. CORSER.—Is this not a line that has been turned down by one of the Houses of Parliament in Queensland?

Mr. HIGGS.—Forgive me if I do not answer questions without notice. However, if I am taunted in this fashion, I reply that I believe that the Legislative Council of Queensland, owing probably to the promptings of our friend from Wide Bay, did turn down this particular proposal.

Mr. CORSER.—On four different occasions.

Mr. HIGGS.—Will the honorable member tell me whether he or his friends have any personal interest in the railway from Mundubbera?

Mr. CORSER.—I should say, yes.

Mr. HIGGS.—Now we know that because certain people own land in this neighbourhood they desire a line to be constructed for their benefit. This 2,000,000 acres of land is mostly Crown land, and can be got for the purposes of

settlement for practically nothing; whereas we know that the Government of Victoria are paying £20 an acre in order to settle returned soldiers. Maryborough need not complain, seeing that it would get its share of the advantages of the line from Mundubbera to Monto. The Queensland Government have already set aside 699,000 acres, and are prepared to set aside another 2,000,000 acres for the benefit of our returned men.

During the last elections the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) sent a personal letter to the mother of every soldier, and audaciously addressed each one of them, although he could not know hundreds of thousands of them, as "My dear." The Government have now to make good the promises made in that letter. Mr. Hughes promised that his Government would not desert the mothers, or their sons at the Front, either during the war or after the war; and at the same time he said there was another party, meaning the party on this side of the House, who were pro-Germans, Sinn Feiners, and disloyalists, who would desert them. I suppose that at the next khaki election, when we get this indemnity of £120,000,000 from the Germans, we of the Labour party will be described as Bolsheviks. The general impression is that Bolsheviks are people who kill off the rich and steal their property, and as such we shall be described.

What were the Government doing with regard to demobilization? We saw that Keith Murdoch, the—shall I say?—brilliant correspondent of certain newspapers, complained that the Government had deliberately ordered the demobilization to cover a period of two years—deliberately sent orders abroad not to bring our soldiers back. Then the plot was exposed. I suppose that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) desired the soldiers over there for his own purposes. Honorable members may be interested to know that I met a defeated candidate not long ago who explained to me that his defeat was due to the fact that "Billy did not stand to me with the soldiers' votes." I wonder whether it is desired that the soldiers shall remain abroad over the next election. Of course, we know that soldiers are coming back now, owing to the proposal



of the Government having been disclosed by Keith Murdoch.

In a recent issue of the *Argus* there is a report of a welcome given to Bishop Long, at the Trinity Grammar School, Kew. This gentleman, on that occasion, complained of the manner in which he and others had been treated by this Government in reference to the education of our soldiers. Bishop Long, who has the military rank of Brigadier-General, in the course of his remarks, said—

that he had gone to France expecting to do the work of a padre, but on arrival General Birdwood asked him to undertake work which practically ended his career in this capacity. The new work was that of organizing the education service for the soldiers. General Birdwood had cabled to Australia, with the usual result—no reply. He (Bishop Long) learned in the months that were to follow what it was to wait for a reply from the people who were supposed to answer cable messages. Early efforts had to be made against officialdom. Books were smuggled up, no matter how the transport officer cut down allowances, and mathematical and other classes were held at night. This showed the men's great desire for education. He became Director of Education. He had to think of 200,000 men from every part of Australia, the great majority of whom would depend for their living on their hands, and if left alone would gradually come to depend upon work as casual labourers—the first to suffer in hard times.

"The feeling over there," said Bishop Long earnestly, "was—Australia's dead. They will not think about demobilization, about the end of the war, or about repatriation . . ."

While the Australian Government was always talking about how much it was going to cost, and side-stepping, he and his helpers borrowed things, and big English engineering firms lent them things.

This is the Government, the Prime Minister of which wrote to all the mothers of soldiers in Australia, promising to look after them and their sons after the war.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—It was evidently time the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) went to London.

Mr. HIGGS.—Do you know what the soldiers think about the Minister?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Yes, I do; and so do you.

Mr. HIGGS.—I should like to read to the Committee, if the light in the chamber were good enough, the opinion of William Winfield. He wrote from No. 3 Camp,

Parkhouse, to the *British Australasian*, giving the opinion of the soldiers about Senator Pearce. He spoke of the disabilities they laboured under in Egypt, and how they protested to Senator Pearce, and Senator Pearce ignored their protest. They complained of having been compelled to go to the disgusting slums of Egypt because all the decent hotels were made out of bounds. This soldier stated that because one of the nurses married a private soldier she was dismissed, and that the nurses in Egypt were ordered not to be seen in the streets with any private soldier.

Mr. YATES.—The nurses were not allowed to walk even with their brothers.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Surely you do not blame the Government for all those things?

Mr. HIGGS.—Who is responsible but the Government? A protest was sent to Senator Pearce, and this soldier states that it was ignored. How are the Government to escape the blame?

What have the Government done to protect the dependants of soldiers at the front and returning soldiers in the matter of profiteering? What has the member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser), who ought to know a little about the price of goods, done to protect the general public against profiteering, and to point out how the Government could intervene?

Mr. CORSER.—Do you find any profiteering up in Wide Bay?

Mr. HIGGS.—There is profiteering everywhere.

Mr. CORSER.—It is not there.

Mr. HIGGS.—But the only case I remember where the Government took any action to prevent profiteering was in the matter of a second-hand dealer in kerosene tins. He sold old tins at more than the regulation price, and was brought to Court. The magistrate was indignant. He said, "It is my duty to send you to gaol. However, I will not do that on this occasion, but I shall fine you £100 for each offence."

Mr. JOWETT.—For each tin?

Mr. HIGGS.—The honorable member must not be so frivolous. "His troubles" about profiteering! Profiteering does not hurt him. The higher the

price, the bigger his banking account. This second-hand dealer, who goes round from yard to yard, crying, "Any rags, any bones, any bottles to-day—the same old story in the same old way"—is fined £100 at South Melbourne for each offence; but when the highly respectable, fashionable Collins-street firm, Messrs. George and George, were brought before the Court the other day for exhibiting goods with a false trade description, namely, "art. silk," did the magistrate become indignant about them?

Dr. MALONEY.—They ought to have been gaoled.

Mr. HIGGS.—I really believe that if the Commonwealth Government put some of the profiteers in gaol, it would not be long before the public would be getting goods at reasonable prices. I do not believe in Russian methods of dealing with people, but there should be something like equality of treatment. If a fine of £100 was necessary in the case of a second-hand dealer, who, I suppose, did not receive the education that was given to the gentlemen who comprise the firm of George and George, and their managers, what ought to be the fine imposed on those gentlemen? But the magistrate did not get indignant at all. He thought a £5 fine and a guinea costs would meet the case. I protest against the manner in which the Supply Bill has been introduced.

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [6.13].

—It is rather surprising, seeing that we have just come through such a lengthy recess, that some members on the Ministerial side have not some complaints to make. There have been grumblings innumerable spoken in our ears, and we have heard complaints by way of interjection across the chamber, while during the recess we have often heard from members on the Ministerial side that when the House met, and they had an opportunity of exercising their lungs and attacking the Government, they would be heard from. I do not know whether the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) or other Ministers have had a hypnotic influence, but yesterday's Caucus of the National party seems to have disarmed all criticism from their

own side. The first opportunity in six months is now given to Ministerialists to voice their complaints about mal-administration, repatriation, soldiers' pensions, and the treatment of returned soldiers generally, yet they have said absolutely nothing. For my part I do not intend to be silent.

During the all-night sitting that took place just prior to Christmas the matter of assistance to the manufacturers of Australian sheep dip was discussed. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) had previously promised to assist the local manufacturers of this article against the importers. The recess was more than half way through before the Acting Prime Minister, in carrying out his multifarious duties, happened to light upon the promise made by the Prime Minister before he left for Great Britain. This promise, given to the manufacturers of Australian sheep dip, was that if they could satisfy the Wool Committee and the experts that they could turn out as good a dip in Australia as was produced by Cooper or Quibell, they should have an embargo placed upon importations while shipping space was so short, and an opportunity to give employment to a large number of people, and distribute to the sheep-owners of Australia an article which is not only equal, but in some cases superior, to any imported dip. I am not here to distribute compliments to the Ministerial party, but I will say this of the Acting Prime Minister: that, as soon as he discovered—although it was a belated discovery—that the Wool Committee, with Sir John Higgins at their head, had practically said that the local dip was as good as any imported, and that the Prime Minister had made the promise I have referred to, he honoured that promise. Since then some wealthy Australian firms, who are agents for imported sheep dips, have been trying to influence municipal councils and members of Parliament by circular. Two firms that stand out prominently in this agitation against the locally made dip are Dalgety's, who are agents for one imported dip, and the New Zealand Loan Company, who are agents for another. They have circularized nearly every municipality



throughout Australia, and nearly every member of Parliament, both State and Federal, in the endeavour to throw the local manufacturers out of the business, and, consequently, to throw out of employment a large number of Australians. I believe the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) will agree with me that the local dip is equal, if not superior, to the imported.

Mr. JOWETT.—You are absolutely right.

Mr. FENTON.—The Wool Committee are satisfied with it, and the makers are offering this splendid article to Australian pastoralists at less than Quibell's or Cooper's can supply their goods at.

Mr. CORSER.—The local cattle dip is better than the imported cattle dip.

Mr. FENTON.—That is so. If we are here to make Australia a self-contained country as far as practicable, as it should be, surely we will put up a big fight in this House for an industry of this kind, established under the conditions under which it has been established. I am sounding this warning note, because I am afraid that some municipalities have been led into a sort of trap by this appeal to them to place an embargo not on the imported dip, but on the locally-made article. I know something about this, because some country or semi-country municipalities are in my electorate. Let this House fight those squatters, who will have the imported article. I hope when the Tariff proposals are tabled, we shall have such a duty on this and other items that we can set at nought opposition from any other quarter. I am glad to have backing in this matter from the Ministerial side. I hope we shall continue to give our ardent support to this Australian industry. I complained just prior to the Christmas adjournment that the promise given by the Prime Minister in that matter had not been kept, but I pointed out that the Prime Minister had taken upon himself a big load of duties that he was not able to discharge unaided. I said that if the work was better distributed amongst the members of the Ministry, some matters that had been hung up for months would be more expeditiously attended to. No one man, no matter what his brain power is, can, espe-

cially in war-time, carry the load the Prime Minister attempted to carry, and which the Acting Prime Minister has, unfortunately, been attempting to carry, since the departure of that honorable gentleman. But we know that shipping space was very scarce during the war, and that the British Government requested that as far as practicable Australia should do for herself all that she could, so that ships might not have to carry any more than the utmost necessities by way of cargo to Australia—indeed, that Australians, so far as possible, should supply their own requirements. In the face of that special request, so negligent were the Government that, by some means or other, the firms interested in the imported dip were able to obtain shipping space.

Mr. CORSER.—They had procured it before.

Mr. FENTON.—No. If the Prime Minister had acted up to his promises, no imported dip would have been brought out to Australia, and Australian manufacturers of that commodity would have been saved from having to practically close down, thus throwing out of work a very large number of men. In several of the States manufacturers of Australian sheep dip have satisfied the most able and candid critics as to the quality of their product.

Mr. JOWETT.—I consider the Australian dip the best. I have tried it.

Mr. FENTON.—Sir John Higgins showed me a pile of correspondence to similar effect; and he remarked—and I am sure that I am not uttering a breach of confidence in stating this—"These manufacturers of sheep dip have been treated in a scandalous fashion." The Australian manufacturers had been working three shifts continuously in order to keep their promise that they would supply Australian sheep-owners with full quantities. Yet, by what means I am unable to state, certain wealthy firms interested were enabled to secure shipping space with the result that hundreds of Australian working men were thrown out of employment. I am surprised that the farmers, through their Farmers' Union, should permit themselves to listen to the

claims of agents for the imported commodity—staunch and stalwart Protectionists as the farmers ought always to be in their own interests. Why is it that today the farmers of this community, through the Farmers' Union, are being hoodwinked by wealthy importers who are endeavouring to force upon the man on the land the squelching of a local industry? If the farmers allow themselves to be deceived in this case, it will serve them right if their own pockets are squeezed by those same wealthy importing firms by rises in the price of the overseas article. I hope Parliament will stand by the local manufacturers, and not only by regulation place an embargo on the imported dips, but in the Tariff itself make it absolutely impossible for any sheep dip to come into Australia. There are undoubtedly sinister influences at work. When I see what is happening, I want to know whether, into our municipal councils and the ranks of the very farmers themselves, there are not certain persons interesting themselves in order to farm the farmers. If the local sheep dip were being charged for, say, at double the price of the imported dip, or even at 10s. a case over and above the other article, I could understand some amount of opposition. But when we know that a better and cheaper article is being offered by Australian manufacturers to the Australian farmer and sheep-owner, I am puzzled at the attitude adopted by the latter.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Dalgety's have got them in their grip.

Mr. GIBSON.—Give the manufacturers protection, but not prohibition.

Mr. FENTON.—If the promises of the Prime Minister had been kept there would have been prohibition for this industry for months and months past. The local manufacturers are prepared to put their dip to any conceivable test as against the imported, and they are confident that the expert verdict will always be absolutely in their favour. Why, therefore, should not our farmers encourage our own manufacturers in every way?

Mr. RILEY.—I call attention to the absence of a quorum. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. FENTON.—There has been circulated amongst honorable members a pamphlet in which it is made to appear that unless an embargo be placed on the locally-made sheep dip the Australian wool industry will suffer. The tests passed by the locally manufactured sheep dip go to show, however, that it is equally as effective as is the imported article in dealing, not only with blowfly, but all other pests. It remains for this Parliament to stand up against the trickery on which so much money has been spent, and to stand by the local industry.

I desire now to refer to another local industry, which is under the control of the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster). We have been boasting that we will find employment, not only for our returned soldiers, but for every man and woman in Australia. With so much to do and so little done, there should be no talk of unemployment insurance in Australia. Here every man and woman should be profitably employed. Our policy in respect of the Tariff and other matters is very much awry if we are not providing for every Australian artisan. We have in Australia men who are employed in making table sets for the "C.B." or common battery system, in connexion with the telephone service. Those sets are made of Australian woods by Australian workmen, but I am informed that the men engaged in this industry are now practically to be deprived of their employment, since orders have been sent out of the country for the supply of at least 2,000 sets, to be made, I presume, of foreign material by people who contribute nothing to the upkeep of the Commonwealth. A Government that is prepared to countenance this sort of thing is not acting consistently with the policy of developing this country. This matter may not have come under the direct attention of the Postmaster-General, but I ask him to inquire into it and to see that these orders are carried out by our own people in our own country.

Another matter in respect of which this Government has been negligent—

Mr. JOWETT.—Not the present Government?

*Sitting suspended from 6.28 to 7.45 p.m.*



Mr. FENTON.—Yes. Before we adjourned for dinner the honorable member indorsed my statement as to the treatment of certain manufacturers. As a member of the Wool Committee, as a wool grower, and as a member of this House, he has done so, and I therefore expect him to join with me in condemning the Government, if they continue such a policy.

The present Administration are taking but little interest in machinery for the elimination of weevil from wheat. All the work being done in that direction in South Australia and Victoria is under the auspices of the British Government, which is bearing the whole cost. The Commonwealth Government are standing aloof, although the matter is one of great importance to our primary producers.

Mr. RODGERS.—It is something that will happen only once in the lifetime of a nation.

Mr. FENTON.—That may or may not be so. In South Australia last week some of us inspected machinery that is doing magnificent work in killing weevil in wheat, destroying the eggs, and removing from the grain everything of a deleterious character, so that it may be sent away in a proper condition.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—To which process is the honorable member referring?

Mr. FENTON.—I am referring to machinery employed in South Australia by the firm of Bagshaw and Company. It is a rotary process, the wheat finally passing through cylinders carrying a degree of heat sufficient to destroy the weevil. I was surprised to learn that the British Government alone are taking an interest in this work.

Mr. PIGOTT.—But they own the wheat which is being dealt with.

Mr. FENTON.—Why does the Commonwealth Government stand aloof from schemes of that kind?

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—What does the honorable member mean? It is only in respect of the Imperial wheat stacks that this process is necessary.

Mr. FENTON.—We were told only this afternoon that we have still 2,000,000 tons of wheat to dispose of.

Mr. PIGOTT.—What about the erection of silos?

Mr. FENTON.—There has been much talk as to the erection of silos by the Government, but it is a case of talk and no action. I am surprised to find honorable members who are supposed to represent the primary producers standing as apologists for the Government in this regard.

In submitting his preliminary financial statement to the Committee this afternoon, the Treasurer (Mr. Watt), so far as I am aware, did not indicate that the amount which he gave us in respect of our loan indebtedness included other than war loans. A financial statement which deals only with war loans and interest thereon is by no means complete. We have borrowed money in respect of many of our undertakings; we are paying interest on a great deal of money borrowed in connexion with the Northern Territory and the Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta railway. With these, and other loans, I do not think the Treasurer dealt this afternoon; but I hope that before the Bill is passed we shall have full information in regard to them. We have to pay over £80,000 a year by way of interest on the Northern Territory loans, and we are also paying interest on over £6,000,000 borrowed for the construction of the East-West railway. All these represent burdens upon the people, and should be included in any financial statement made by the Treasurer. I shall question the honorable gentleman later on as to whether they were included in the total indebtedness of £261,000,000 of which he spoke. I understood him to say that that amount represented merely the money borrowed locally and abroad to carry on the war. In addition to the other items enumerated by me, the Government have borrowed money from the Australian Notes Trust Fund and other Trust Funds, and also, I believe, from the Commonwealth Bank. In respect of all these borrowings, interest has to be paid. Australia to-day is paying, by way of interest alone, an amount considerably in excess of what was the revenue of the Commonwealth in normal times. Our interest bill in respect of State and Federal borrowings is something like £30,000,000 per annum, and is increasing. We are told that a further loan will be necessary

before we can clear the decks in respect of the interest bill relating to the war and repatriation. The financial situation of the Commonwealth is serious.

It is incumbent upon honorable members, not only to safeguard the existing industries of Australia, but to encourage the establishment of new ones, since in that way alone can we hope to keep our people well employed, and to induce others to come here. We need a scientific Protective Tariff, and we should do everything possible by means of the Tariff and other schemes to make Australia as far as possible self-contained.

Mr. PRIGOTT.—And increase the cost of living.

Mr. FENTON.—If the cost of living is to go higher than it is, we can expect to look a revolution in the face. The people's patience has reached the breaking point. Apart from industrial troubles, there are in all the cities of the Commonwealth people who are in absolute want, and this notwithstanding that we have stored up over 2,000,000 tons of wheat. And yet the honorable member for Calare suggests that the imposition of a scientific Tariff would increase the cost of living.

Mr. PRIGOTT.—It has done so in the past.

Mr. FENTON.—If that is the honorable member's idea of saving Australia, and he is going to get a majority of his party to think with him, then the outlook is a poor one; but I do not believe he will.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. WALLACE (West Sydney) [8.0].—I do not intend to delay the Committee very long in dealing with the Supply measure, but I think it well to direct the attention of Ministers to some anomalies that exist. Provision should be made during this session to render assistance to old-age pensioners. Some fourteen or fifteen cases have been brought under my notice in which the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act appears to have been administered in a very harsh way, though we know that sympathetic administration of such an Act is necessary. Honor-

able members will agree that 12s. 6d. per week is not sufficient to enable an old-age pensioner to procure even the necessities of life in these days when the cost of living is so high. I know of one case in which an old-age pensioner was earning a few shillings by doing a little work which brought her weekly income up to 22s. The Pensions Office got to hear of this, and they have since been deducting 5s. per week to cover arrears, leaving the pensioner with only 7s. 6d. per week. The Government should instruct their departmental officers that such cases should be overlooked, especially at this time, and that no action should be taken whatever to the injury of the pensioner. It is up to the Government to increase the amount of the old-age pension. Now that the cost of living has been increased by from 75 to 100 per cent., the pension should be 25s. or 30s. per week instead of 12s. 6d. per week. I have another case to which special attention should be directed, and it is one which affects a seaman. We are having trouble with seamen just now, and this is a case which will show the general public how seamen are treated. This man has been a seaman on the Australian coast for sixteen years. Whilst on a trip to the Fiji Islands, he met with an accident in Fiji, from which he became totally incapacitated. He is a Swede, who has been naturalized in Australia for the past fourteen years, and is domiciled in Sydney. He applied for an invalid pension, but his application was rejected on the ground that the incapacity occurred outside of Australia. The pensions officer informs me that the application was refused on the authority of the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor. He writes to say that the evidence showed that Mr. Hansen's incapacity occurred during his absence from Australia, and in view of the provisions of the Act, he had to take the course of refusing the application following an expression of opinion by the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor that a claimant for an invalid pension becoming permanently incapacitated whilst employed on an Australian vessel outside of Australia could not be regarded as coming within the provisions of the Act.



Mr. MATHEWS.—Had this man a home in Sydney?

Mr. WALLACE.—Yes.

Mr. FENTON.—Was the ship owned in Australia?

Mr. WALLACE.—Yes; and the man was working under an award of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Court. If such a man is not an Australian citizen, who is?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—He would not be disqualified under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Mr. WALLACE.—No. He received the amount of compensation to which he was entitled under that Act, and has been living on that for the last three years. Now he has nothing, and that is why he applied for the invalid pension. I say that his application was rejected on the ground that his incapacity occurred outside of Australia. It should be remembered that we have 7,000 seamen on the Australian coast, and many of these men are trading to the South Sea Islands and to New Zealand, while they are domiciled in Australia. Their families are here, and they are paying rates and taxes in Australia. It is strange that they cannot be brought within the provisions of an Act of the Parliament of this country.

Mr. MATHEWS.—As a layman, I should say that is bad law if the man has a home in Australia.

Mr. WALLACE.—Undoubtedly it is the result of an unsympathetic administration of the law, for no sane person would say that this man is not an Australian.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The administration of the Act in Sydney is very sympathetic.

Mr. WALLACE.—The honorable member may have found it so. I will say that, so far as Mr. Macpherson is concerned, he is prepared to give every case consideration, but he is bound by the provisions of the Act, and if instructions come to him from Melbourne to carry out those provisions to the letter, he is unable to give the assistance asked for. We cannot blame him, but we can blame the Department.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The honorable member should blame the Parliament that passed the Act.

Mr. WALLACE.—The Treasurer (Mr. Watt), instead of introducing measures to foment industrial strife and trouble, should bring in an amendment of the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act to meet such cases as I have referred to.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The honorable member should not spoil a good case.

Mr. WALLACE.—I cannot spoil this case, and I say that the Act should be so amended as to bring such a case within its provision.

Mr. FENTON.—I advise the honorable member to bring the case before the Minister.

Mr. WALLACE.—I told the man concerned that I would not let the matter drop, and that I intended to try to get satisfaction for him, because I believe that he should be given a pension.

I should like to ask what is the use of paying Commissioners to make inquiries into the cost of commodities if the only result is to be the distribution of a few reports to honorable members, and the outside public are to know no more about them than they can glean from the brief *résumé* of such reports that appears in the press. I refer honorable members to Report No. 11 on clothing by the Commissioners, which discloses a scandalous condition of affairs, and shows that the manufacturers of woollen goods have been exploiting the Government and the people for the last four years.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The honorable member must include the Commonwealth Factory with them.

Mr. WALLACE.—I had the pleasure of going through the Commonwealth Clothing Factory, and I was surprised at the progress made there, and the cheapness with which they were able to turn out goods.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Is the honorable member aware that the Commonwealth Factory has set the price for all military work.

Mr. WALLACE.—I know that at the Commonwealth Factory they can turn out a military overcoat for 27s. 6d.

Mr. PIGOTT.—What is their cost price for a suit of clothes?

Mr. WALLACE.—A suit of clothes complete can be turned out for 30s.

Mr. PIGOTT.—That is so; that is what we were told there.

Mr. WALLACE.—It surprised me to learn how cheap military clothing can be turned out there. They can turn out an overcoat for 27s. 6d., and yet if you come up to the city you will find that an overcoat of inferior material, and not nearly as good workmanship, sells for £5 or £6. I want to know where the difference in cost is going.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—We should get a return laid on the table of the costs in the Commonwealth Factory.

Mr. WALLACE.—I wish the honorable member would do so. In this report I find the statement made of a hosiery and knitting factory that in 1914 had a capital of £105,404, and their net profit was 12 per cent. In 1917 their net capital was £233,217, and their net profit 21.279 per cent.

Mr. TUDOR.—Does the honorable member know which company is referred to.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That concern does not require much protection.

Mr. WALLACE.—In the limited time at my disposal I cannot go through the whole of this report on clothing, but I recommend honorable members to study it. Speaking of the woollen mills, the Commissioners state that in 1914 they had a net capital of £1,144,385, and made a profit of 13.444 per cent. In 1917, their capital was £1,459,040, and they had a net profit of 25.978 per cent. In 1916, their net profit was 39.452 per cent., which represents an increase of 300 per cent. on the profits made in 1914.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—They had to work three shifts.

Mr. WALLACE.—Whether they were working one shift or three shifts honorable members will agree that an increase of 300 per cent. in profits in war time calls for some comment. This is what the Commissioners have to say—

It will be observed that the net profits on capital derived by the hosiery and knitting factories have been much in excess of what is fair and reasonable. The proprietors generally

have substantially benefited by the abnormal conditions of trade arising out of the war.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—They may have turned over their capital frequently.

Mr. WALLACE.—I think the honorable member will agree that when a set of individuals are in control of an industry, presumably for the benefit of the community, if their output is augmented, they should be satisfied with a lower proportional return.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Not in the circumstances under which they were working. The Government asked them to work their machinery three shifts.

Mr. WALLACE.—The honorable member must know as well as I do that before profits are disclosed depreciation of machinery is allowed for. In running any business, wages and all charges are deducted before any profit is disclosed, so that even if the machinery is renewed every six months the cost of renewal is added to the price of the article.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The Treasurer will tell the honorable member that the firm to which he refers paid 15s. in the £1 as excess profit tax.

Mr. WALLACE.—So it should. But that does not alter the fact that the firm has been exploiting the people. Is there any man in the community who, if he were allowed to walk into a bank and take money, would not be willing to pay back 15s. in the £1? That is what the profiteers are doing.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The whole question is whether it is legitimate to calculate that profit on the capital when they are turning over the capital three times by working three shifts.

Mr. WALLACE.—I turn now to the wholesale softgoods warehouses. I find that in 1914 those warehousemen had a capital of £3,553,535, and their net profit on the capital was 8.33 per cent. In 1917 they had a capital of £3,646,492, and their net profit was 15.21 per cent., an increase of 7 per cent. in the profit as against an increase in capital of about only £100,000. The Commission's report is too bulky to be placed in *Hansard* in its entirety, but I again advise honorable members to read it carefully in anticipation of a request by some of these firms



increased protection. The Government have lifted the price-fixing regulation, and the wholesale distribution is to continue without interference. The Commission says—

Prices are now fixed by wholesalers, not by adding the same uniform percentage to landed cost, but by directing the head of each department, e.g., Manchester goods, ready-made clothing, silks, &c., to produce at the end of each half year a defined gross profit on the sales. The departmental head knows what his goods have cost into warehouse, and so adjusts the additions to that cost of the various articles handled as to bring out an aggregate amount in turnover which will yield the stipulated gross profit over aggregate landed cost.

The minimum profit which the departmental head must return is 33½d. per cent. And yet honorable members growl because seamen are asking for £16 per month! To the questions asked by the Prime Minister the following answers were submitted by the Commission:—

The enhanced prices are directly attributable to the war and to the fact that local manufacturers, wholesale and retail distributors have, to a large extent, taken advantage of abnormal conditions for the purpose of increasing their profits.

As more particular causes the Commission refers to—

(a) The scarcity of raw material, the greater portion of which, under our present conditions, must be imported.

(b) The cessation or limitation of supply of piece goods, yarns, &c., in those countries which hitherto have constituted our chief sources of supply.

(c) Restriction of shipping facilities.

(d) Increased freight, insurance, exchange, and shipping charges generally.

(e) Increased prices charged and excessive profits made by Australian manufacturers of woollen piece goods.

(f) Increased profit made by wholesale distributors, and in many cases by retail distributors.

(g) The increased actual amount of duty paid as a consequence of *ad valorem* duties being charged upon the increased values of imported goods.

So far as the Commission has been able to ascertain (with the exceptions mentioned in the next sentence), there is no evidence of the existence of any combination of manufacturers or distributors for the purpose of fixing prices or manipulating the market.

The exceptions are that the association concerned fixes throughout Australia the minimum price for flannel said to be applicable

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only "to the lowest-grade flannel that can be made," and also a minimum price for blankets, which, according to the evidence, has a similar basis to that of the minimum price for flannel.

The report contains the crux of the whole situation, and it is essential that the public should understand it. The Commission has suggested that prices may be regulated by prescribing the following maximum percentages, to be added to "prime cost," representing actual cost of material and wages:—

- (a) Tweeds and serges, 30 per cent.
- (b) Blankets and flannels, 25 per cent.
- (c) Hosiery and knitted goods, 20 per cent.
- (d) Felt hats, 22½ per cent.

If the Commission recommended that the merchants should be allowed to make the foregoing percentages of profit, what profit must they be making at the present time? In regard to retail distributors, the Commission recommended—

Prices to be controlled by prescribing a maximum of 33½ per cent. to be added to cost landed in warehouse or shop of all materials for clothing and of all articles of clothing.

The report concluded—

The following suggestion, which is not directly related to control of prices, is also submitted:—"That in the public interest action be taken to bring about the compulsory keeping by all traders of prescribed trading accounts, profit and loss statements, and balance-sheets."

It is the duty of the Government to take a decided stand in this matter. I have quoted only the report in regard to clothing. Let honorable members read the report upon groceries.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The Commonwealth has no power to deal with this matter.

Mr. WALLACE.—We ought to obtain the power. The Commonwealth took power under the War Precautions Act to do many things which it was said not to have power to do, and honorable members should be prepared to see that the Commonwealth is given the necessary authority to deal with the matter of profiteering. Instead of frittering away time with some of the measures which the Government propose to introduce, let them bring forward a set of Bills for a referendum at which the people shall be asked to confer power in this matter upon the Federal authority.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The States have the power to-day.

Mr. WALLACE.—I am sure that if this Parliament desires power to control the profiteers the people will be prepared to give it. It must be apparent to them and to honorable members that it is useless to have five different authorities attempting to control commodities and fix prices. Under that system Queensland will have one set of conditions, New South Wales another, South Australia still another, and so on. We require one central authority to exercise power throughout the Commonwealth, and the proper authority is the Federal Parliament. We have learnt something from the lessons taught by the war. We have organized most of the industries; we have these reports by the Inter-State Commission, and there should be no difficulty in either taking steps to reduce prices to normal, or to raise wages in proportion to the abnormal prices. Honorable members talk of industrial unrest. But what else can they expect? During the five years of war the minds of the people have been disturbed. For patriotic and other reasons many men have borne the burden of increased cost of living and other irksome conditions without complaint. Now the war is over, yet they see the cost of living still increasing. Notwithstanding the statement of the Commonwealth Statistician that the cost of living has increased only 41 per cent. since 1913, £3 per week to-day will not purchase as much as 25s. would have purchased five years ago.

Mr. ORCHARD.—Does it not occur to the honorable member that if the members of the various unions were to invest their funds in co-operative concerns they would solve this problem for themselves?

Mr. WALLACE.—Has it ever occurred to the honorable member that if the Government started co-operative concerns they would assist to control prices? If the honorable member had studied the co-operative system as much as I have done he would know that it is a fallacy to suppose that they can entirely solve this question. Whilst I admit they do a lot of good in their immediate spheres, yet there is a large class of people in big industrial

centres who, because of their nomadic habits, irregularity of employment and uncertainty of domicile, cannot get any advantage from membership in a co-operative concern unless there is a complete reciprocity between all the co-operative concerns throughout the country. I am interested in a co-operative concern at Lidcombe, and I admit that we started it with 150 subscribers of £1 each, and to-day it is flourishing. But I will give an illustration of the difficulties with which it has to contend. A few months ago, when horse feed was dear, I bought, from a farmer, two trucks of chaff. We sold that chaff at a satisfactory price, but when I asked him for a further supply he refused, because the Sussex-street merchants had heard of the sale to me and had warned him that if he sold more chaff to me they would refuse to handle his produce. The store at Lidcombe cannot get supplies of Champion's vinegar, because the manufacturers have been warned that if they supply the co-operative store, the local storekeepers will not stock the article.

I contend that it is the responsibility of the Government, and not of a few individuals, to undertake co-operative effort. We have read of what local councils do in that direction in different parts of Europe. It is possible for local councils in Australia to establish co-operative stores and eliminate the middleman. Instead of voting £500 or £600 to each local council for the purpose of providing pick and shovel work for returned soldiers, the Government would be better advised to vote a few thousand pounds to municipalities, so that they may open stores and check the profiteer.

Mr. JOWETT.—Does not the honorable member know that the New South Wales Government will not allow a meat market to be established in Sydney?

Mr. WALLACE.—We do not see much meat in Sydney these days. Meat is a curio for which one must look in the museum.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The honorable member's time has expired.



Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [8.30].—A less inquisitive individual than myself might be pardoned for asking what arrangements the Government have arrived at with a view to pacifying their malcontents. Surely during the past seven months the actions of the Government have been such as to justify criticism on the part of some honorable member upon the other side of the chamber. If we were discussing a no-confidence motion, I could readily understand the delicacy of the situation; but seeing that we are merely debating the question of Supply, I am indeed surprised to find many of the stormy petrels amongst the Ministerial following either conspicuous by their absence or absolutely dumb. However, we shall doubtless learn the reason for this silence within the course of a few days, and we shall then know precisely where we stand. Of course, I can quite imagine the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) saying to Ministerial supporters, "Now, don't you talk too much; you throw the blame on the Opposition if the old-age pensions are not paid by the 2nd of next month"; or the Treasurer (Mr. Watt) exclaiming, "You make the Labour party keep back the pay of the civil servants, and then they will get hell for having done it." That is the sort of conversation which must have gone on. I can assign no other reason for the attitude of my honorable friends opposite.

I listened with pleasure to the speech of the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Wallace), and I confess that all he said was correct. During the war period, the manufacturers of Australia have remorselessly robbed the people of this country of millions of pounds; and yet I will pile higher duties on imports if I can. The fact that our manufacturers have deliberately robbed the consumers is the people's own fault. They refused to give the Commonwealth Parliament the power to prevent this exploitation; but while I frankly admit that during the war the manufacturers have robbed the people of Australia of millions of pounds, I say, without any hesitation, that the importers have robbed them of ten times as much. I do not forget that they are all

patriots. I have no doubt that in the future when the importer is asked by his children, "Father, what did you do in the great war?" his reply will be, "I sold soldiers' comforts while mother waved the flag." All these people—manufacturers and importers alike—are great patriots. They never grow tired of waving the Union Jack. But God help a man if he attempts to wave the red flag. Personally, I have no great opinion of the individual who always wants to wave the red flag; but I have a less opinion of the man who always wishes to wave the Union Jack because under the shelter of that flag he has been robbing the consumers throughout the war. Only the other day we had that old imbecile, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Alderman Cabena, compelling the Labour movement to carry the Union Jack at the head of its procession on Eight Hours Day.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—That was a hardship, was it not?

Mr. MATHEWS.—It was. I ask the honorable member for Kooyong whether he thinks that he can command respect for the Union Jack by compelling people to carry it?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—It should not have been a matter of compulsion; it should have been carried voluntarily.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Can one have respect for a flag which he is compelled to carry? Then why was this action taken by the Lord Mayor? It was not because it was thought that respect for the Union Jack would be thus increased, but because it was anticipated there would be a refusal on the part of the eight hours movement to obey the order, that a riot would ensue, and that the Bolsheviks could then be shot down. That was the reason underlying the issue of the edict for the carrying of the Union Jack. The order, however, served only to bring the Union Jack into contempt. The idea of the Lord Mayor of Melbourne—

Mr. JOWETT.—A good man.

Mr. MATHEWS.—He is a true sample of his class. I suppose that some of his barrackers instilled into his feeble mind the idea that something might be gained by the issue of that order. Had the leaders of the Eight Hours movement

said, "We will walk in procession, and we will not carry the Union Jack," what would have taken place? The instruction, I repeat, was not issued with a view to commanding respect for the Union Jack, but rather with a view to belittling the Eight Hours movement. In Victoria that movement is annually celebrated by the workers, who have succeeded in reducing their daily hours of labour from sixteen to eight, and who will doubtless still further reduce them in the near future. I cannot forget that in days gone by they had to wrest their improved industrial conditions from the flag-waggers of the Union Jack. I am surprised that any honorable member opposite should not recognise how futile it was to endeavour to instil into the minds of the people who walked in the Eight Hours procession respect for the Union Jack by compelling them to carry it. I am one of those who do not think that it is essential that an organization should have either an emblem or a flag. But the fact remains that there has grown up in the human mind a desire for something of that sort. A flag or an emblem of some description constitutes a rallying point just as do the colours of a military regiment. With all our civilization, we are to-day very fond of ritual.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Tomfoolery.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Well, many people describe the love of the Union Jack as tomfoolery. The fact remains that we wear a button or a medal to show that we are associated with some particular organization. That being so, why should the Labour movement be prevented from carrying a red flag if it wishes to do so? Candidly, I do not see the use of carrying it; but now that I am prevented from carrying the red flag, I desire to carry it. Persecution has never kept down anything. The very religion of the Christian people became dominant in spite of persecution. Indeed, I believe that persecution helped it to become dominant.

Mr. JOWETT.—Is the red flag the flag of any Christian people?

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member ought to know that the red flag was the early Christian flag. The Labour

movement is not a sectarian movement. A man may be a Mohammedan and belong to that movement. During the past twelve months in particular, we have had people in our midst who desired to exhibit the red flag at their meetings. I have often looked at that flag and wondered where was the necessity for exhibiting it. These people have attacked me repeatedly, just as they have attacked the Labour party. But we had no desire to prevent them carrying the red flag if they wished to do so.

Mr. YATES.—Why do society ladies carry poodle dogs?

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member might as well ask me why they have bare backs. I do not know. There is not an honorable member opposite who has been in Parliament for an appreciable time, and who believes for a moment that the prohibition imposed by the Government on the carrying of the red flag by any set of people possesses any real value. But things have now gone so far that at race meetings, instead of running up the red flag when the winning jockey has weighed in all right—as was the custom previously—the officials now run up a blue-and-white flag. I understand, too, that the red flag is to be taken away from the railway men and a green one substituted as an emblem of peace. The war is over now, but during its continuance there has been a constant suppression of free speech and a censorship of literature. We were told that these things were necessary in the interests of good government and because freedom of speech and the publication of uncensored literature might give offence to some of our Allies. That objection has now disappeared. We are, I hope, entering upon a new era. Yet we have not heard one word from the Government to-day about the restoration of liberty of speech or of the right of people to fly the red flag if they so desire. I have never yet heard any valid argument why, in time of peace, restrictions should be imposed upon any section of the community who desire to follow their own particular course of action. It stands to the credit of the Government



that they have released the women who were incarcerated for having flown the red flag, but there is a man named Long in gaol, and I ask whether anything can be gained by keeping him there any longer, now that the war is over and peace has been signed. He says that the red flag is the emblem of the brotherhood of man. I have no belief in the brotherhood of man—I know human nature too well; but I would not prevent any other man from holding that belief. Some people consider that by organization and example they will very soon bring about the brotherhood of man. Why should they be prevented from endeavouring to bring it about by the production of literature and the flying of a flag? We may consider their songs foolish, but why should we prevent them from forming their organizations and singing these songs? It may be amusement for them.

Mr. BRENNAN.—They may possibly be right.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Quite possibly they are right. That may be the reason why they are being suppressed. But if it amuses them, why stop them? It reminds me of a big blacksmith I knew, whose wife used to hit him with a poker. A friend said, "I would very soon stop her from doing that." But the big blacksmith merely replied, "It does not hurt me, and it amuses her. Why should I stop her?" If these people choose to carry a red flag and publish newspapers with what they consider high ideals, and go on the Yarra bank, or to any street corner where they are not impeding traffic, to hold forth on a special form of religion, or political ideals, what right has any one to try to prevent them? We have heard a good deal of talk about engendering in the community hostility to our present form of civilization and so forth. Well, all I have to say is that there is a good deal wrong with our civilization, and if these people can conceive methods of improving it, no one has the right to stop them so long as they do not inflict bodily harm on others. If by their advocacy they can bring about social reform in a constitutional way, no one has the right to prevent them by phy-

sical force. The time has passed for indulging in that sort of thing. Last October I warned honorable members that these people would be driven to the breaking point. If there are honorable members opposite who seek an opportunity to shoot down the populace let them say so, but if they desire to have peace in our midst let them see that those people who are being persecuted to-day are permitted to ventilate their opinions so long as they do it in a constitutional way; but honorable members opposite are not entitled to lay down what is a constitutional manner. I have no quarrel with honorable members opposite, or with those who have sent them here, as to their opinions. They think they are right; I think I am right. But they have no right to suppress me, and prevent me from giving expression to my views so long as I do not advocate methods which, in a civilized community, I should not advocate. How can an article published in a newspaper which people are not compelled to read, but which circulates among a section of the community who have a desire to read it, do any harm? If these people wish to give vent to speech on ordinary lines, why should they be prevented from doing so? I do not know whether I can draw from the Government any promise, or get from those associated with them any expression of opinion as to this matter, but I do think the Acting Prime Minister, now peace has been declared, has an opportunity of telling the people of Australia that there will be a cessation of what has taken place in the community for some time past, that people who have been gaoled will be released, and that those who have been prosecuted and persecuted for holding particular ideas will no longer be imprisoned. What possible gain can there be from the continuance of this practice? If political gain could be achieved I could understand it; if the community could be helped in any way by suppressing these things I could understand it; but no honorable member opposite has yet advanced one reason why the desires of people who differ from them should be suppressed, and the Government are very remiss in not taking some step in the direction I am urging.

During the recess, when honorable members did not have the opportunity of ventilating them, crimes that I am surprised that Ministers are not ashamed of were committed. I do not propose to go into the Freeman case, which has already been dealt with, and which will need to be dealt with again; but men have been deported for no reason whatever. Sailors, not enemy aliens, but citizens of allied countries, have deserted their ships, and the whole of the machinery of the Australian Government has been used to deport them. We were not always so considerate of the nations we have been associated with during the war as to go to the length of chasing deserting sailors from one end of Australia to the other, and deporting them. But during the past few years, because it was thought necessary to do so, and because it was thought that we were doing something our Allies desired, men in Melbourne and Sydney have been kept in detention for deportation, not because they were considered to be undesirable citizens, but simply because they were sailors who had deserted from their vessels. I do not know what can be gained by resorting to such extreme methods in such trivial cases. Australia is supposed to be a free country, yet because a man comes here in a foreign vessel and is dissatisfied with the treatment he has received—under no flag does a sailor receive more than a human being should receive, and in the mercantile marine of some nations the conditions under which sailors live are still more undesirable than they are on Australian or British ships—if a sailor deserts, as right down through the centuries, sailors have always deserted, the whole of the machinery of the Defence Department is set to work to institute a search and capture him, if it should so happen that the shipmaster cannot get hold of him while he is in port, or the owners cannot get hold of him, and bring him up before a magistrate. Surely it is time we heard from the Government that this practice will cease. There must be a stage at which sanity will return to the Government and to their supporters.

As to the treatment of the unfortunate who happen to be of German

origin or birth, a case which I recently brought under the notice of the Defence authorities and the Prime Minister's Department, and which was also brought under the attention of the Postmaster-General, who is now dealing with it, is one that I would like to mention to honorable members, asking whether any reason can exist for resorting to such methods as have been employed in regard to it. It is the case of a young fellow named Paul Herman, whose father came to Australia some thirty-two years ago. He was a Pomeranian by birth, and had run away from Germany because of his detestation of the compulsory military service of that country. After being in London for a little time, he came to Australia, and he subsequently brought out his wife and child, Paul, who was then two years of age. I worked with the father in Sydney twenty-three years ago. Paul had one brother who enlisted, and was rejected on account of physical defect, and another who enlisted and went to the Front. The latter returned to Sydney five weeks ago to find that Paul was in gaol because he had been born in Germany. He had a tailor's shop in Sydney, and has documents to prove that he offered to manufacture clothing for the Defence Department at the military price; but after the armistice was signed—not before—he was seized and placed for a time in Darlinghurst gaol, and afterwards removed to the Holdsworth Concentration Camp, where he is now confined. I have endeavoured to ascertain why he was interned. I have asked men closely associated with him if they knew why this step was taken, but the only reason they can advance is that at a meeting of the Young Australia League, he made use of the remark that he believed the money which was being spent on Mr. Hughes' trip to Great Britain, and expenditure of a similar character, could be better devoted to the advancement of the production of Australian goods. As a young Australian, he believes that Australia ought to produce largely, and that the Commonwealth ought to be independent in these matters. That is the only reason his friends can advance for his internment. There can be no possible reason for a sane Government perpetrating



crimes of this character. Are they doing this sort of thing for fun? Do they enjoy inflicting punishment on people just to see them squirm and suffer? What reason can there be for keeping Paul Herman in gaol? There are dozens of similar cases. At Canberra, Australian women married to German husbands, and children reared in Australia—true Australians—have been placed in an internment camp for what reason they do not know. During the war it might have been felt there was some need for all this sort of thing, but when the armistice was signed every one knew that the Germans could not possibly renew the attack on the Allies, that it would be futile to attempt to do so. Yet there are thousands of people still interned in Australia. I am quite ready to admit that remarks made by some of those who were interned were objectionable, and that there is a desire not to keep these people in Australia; but I cannot understand why others who have expressed no enmity to the British Empire are still kept in internment, and I do not believe there are two honorable members opposite who would still keep them in confinement. I am not one of those who attack a Government merely for party purposes, and my remarks upon this subject are not made from a party stand-point at all. I would rather be a Britisher than the native of any other country in the world; but while that is so, I am willing to allow everybody else to have the same opinion about his own native land. I cannot see what we have to gain from legislation or regulations framed for the purpose of incarcerating men for no reason whatever, now that the war is over and peace about to be declared.

**Mr. McGRATH** (Ballarat) [9.1].—I am somewhat surprised that members supporting the Government have not availed themselves of the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the returned soldiers and their treatment since they have come back to Australia. I heard the Acting Prime Minister's statement, in which there is the boast that the cases of only about 4 per cent. of the returned soldiers have not been finalized. If the Acting Prime Minister had been in my position, and

had met as many of these returned soldiers as I have, he would realize that the statement is absolutely untrue. A far greater percentage than that have not been finalized. The promises made to the men prior to their enlistment and on the battlefields are not being fulfilled. Before the election of 1917, the United Kingdom and France were flooded with newspaper reports about tens of millions to be spent on the returned soldiers, without any stipulation or regulation then as to who was to participate. Every soldier had a promise that he would be looked after on his return to Australia. That, I think, was one reason why the soldiers' vote went so largely in favour of the Win-the-war party at that election. The soldiers believed those promises. But they are coming back now, and they are finding that there was little in them. If any young man comes back Class A medically fit, and if he does not want to go upon the land—and not too many of them want, or are fitted, to go on the land—his position is a difficult one. "Back again to mining" is the best that this Government can say to a man who prior to the war may have been a miner in Broken Hill. Some men medically unfit, and whose discharge is not due to any misconduct, get no pension, and they are not entitled to claim vocational training. Men who were miners prior to the outbreak of war have to go back to mining. That is the best that this grateful country can do for them. I say that if the Government want to precipitate trouble they are going the right way about it. These men have been in Flanders fighting for four or five years, during which they have been taught to respect neither life nor property, and they are coming back with some of those feelings still in them. When they realize that nothing is to be done for them, that they are to receive nothing but a paltry month or two of sustenance, there will be trouble. I am bringing these cases continually under the notice of the Victorian Deputy Controller of Repatriation, but I do not get much satisfaction from that quarter. The trouble is that there is too much of the military spirit in the administration. Every man who has a job in that Department must be a major or a

colonel. You never heard of any mere private getting any job worth having in the administrative functions of this country.

Mr. YATES.—And they do not forget they are colonels, either.

Mr. McGRATH.—We set out to beat the German military spirit, but if we are not careful we shall create the same spirit in Australia. I know that every lad who comes back honestly believes that something will be done for him. That is the generally accepted idea. And yet, Class A men are coming back after four or five years' experience of war—men who have been in several "hops-over" in Gallipoli and France—to find that, after a month or two, they are to be finalized, and told to get back to the old job.

There is industrial unrest in this country, and there is good reason for it. During the war wages increased 26 per cent., but the cost of living for food alone has gone up 54 per cent., so that earning power has actually decreased. Men are coming back with one arm off to find that they are to get a pension of 25s. per week. And the Minister for Repatriation says to them, "You are finalized." Finalized! Kicked out into the street on a pension of 25s. per week! The man with one leg is in the same position. I know of an incapacitated man and his wife who get 45s. per week between them. I would sooner be dead and buried a thousand times than be obliged to live on that amount of sustenance, denied as that man must be, the enjoyment of any sport and participation in the every-day affairs of life with other men; living, in fact, in poverty and misery on 45s. per week.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Did you say he was totally incapacitated?

Mr. McGRATH.—Yes; I met that man at Ballan two nights ago. He and his wife are living there on 45s. per week. In my capacity as president of our branch of the Returned Soldiers Institute, and by reason of the fact that it is known I was with them at the Front, I meet dozens of boys. I saw one lad with an arm off. His

mother, who was with him, prayed that I might be able to get him some work to do, as his pension was just enough to enable him to walk the streets and become an absolute loafer.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—But there is vocational training for cases like that.

Mr. McGRATH.—One would have thought that, after four or five years of war, some big scheme would have been devised for the proper treatment of our returned soldiers. I have had men on the sustenance list in Ballarat for six months waiting for vocational training. We are doing our very best by these dilatory methods to prevent these boys from becoming good citizens. Our scheme of vocational training is only a baby affair. It is not half big enough. Provision has only been made for a few cases.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—The Department say they have provided for 17,000 men, and that 4,000 have been trained.

Mr. McGRATH.—The training they have received is not very much. We are not going to turn out fitters and turners or motor mechanics in six months, with all the limitations and restrictions upon the scheme. It is not too much to say that every lad who has been abroad should, upon his return, have an opportunity to undergo some course of training to make him a carpenter, blacksmith, motor mechanic, electric wirer, turner, or fitter, or to qualify him for whatever calling he may have a liking for. These opportunities should not be confined to the medically unfit.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—They are not. The Minister says that every one up to the age of twenty-one years has an opportunity for training.

Mr. McGRATH.—Yes. He means all those who ought never to have gone to the war; the lads who enlisted before they reached the age of twenty-one years. It is true they can get vocational training whether they are in Class A or not; but I am speaking of the great bulk of the men who enlisted over the age of twenty-one years, and I say that a man who, prior to enlistment, was a miner, and returns "Class A," gets no vocational training from the Department, no matter



how good his credentials may be. In the office of the Repatriation Department to-day there is nothing but muddle leading to delay, and the men are getting absolutely sick. I know of a returned soldier who brought his girl from London. He applied for £35 worth of furniture, but his application has been hung up for weeks because of the system of centralization. I contend that the local committee ought to have had power to give that returned soldier the £35 worth of furniture two days after he applied for it. But it appears that everything must be sent on to Melbourne, where it is handled by the military authorities in the usual military manner.

Then we boast about giving men sustenance while on the land. But if land is not productive for a few months after allotment, the miserable £1 per week offered to the soldier settlers cannot be called sustenance. It is impossible for such men to keep on the land. I read in to-day's paper that the Government of Western Australia are paying 9s. per day sustenance to men who take up land in that State. We ought to see that they are not paid less by the Repatriation Department. I know of a young man who gets a pension of 17s. 6d. per week. He is a man with a record for one of the most brilliant deeds on the battlefields of Flanders, for which he was awarded the Military Cross. He was a school teacher, but his health having been broken, he was not able to stand the strain of teaching children. He was lucky enough to get a block of land at Sutton Park, and now he is getting a pension of 17s. 6d. per week, upon which sum he is supposed to be able to work the farm, and make it profitable. I say we are going the right way to make failure a certainty for such men. It is an impossibility for them to be successful in such circumstances.

MR. CHARLTON.—They have no incentive to do anything.

MR. McGRATH.—That is the manner in which they are being treated to-day. And so it is with every phase of the repatriation scheme—all muddle and delay and centralization in Melbourne. The pensions system must be revised, for we may take it for granted that the return-

ing soldiers are not going to accept the conditions "lying down." They do not wish to threaten the community. Their association is a non-party one; but we must make no mistake, for it is going to be a political association. The pension of 30s. was fixed at a time when the cost of living had not increased, and the promises made to the men ought to be fulfilled in the spirit.

MR. TUDOR.—The newspapers all said that the pension was to be raised to £2 per week.

MR. McGRATH.—That is so. Who paid for the cost of the paper that was issued on this matter?

MR. TUDOR.—It was issued by the Government in London.

MR. McGRATH.—And it was filled with glowing promises of what was to be done for the boys. So far as I am concerned, this session will not proceed very far before there is some alteration made regarding the treatment of our men. I want a pronouncement from the Government that every soldier who desires shall receive vocational training; and in this regard there ought to be no exceptions made, provided the men are healthy and fit. There are, of course, some in such a state of health that it would be foolish to send them to learn any trade, and such men ought to be in receipt of a full pension without working.

There is another matter that requires urgent attention. I received a letter to-day from a young boy who enlisted at the age of seventeen, and after four years' service in Gallipoli and in France he was absent without leave for a short time. For this offence he was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in the military compound in France, and in a letter to his mother he says—

You know that I got twelve months' hard labour last Christmas. Well, I was sent away to do it in a military prison. After I had been there about six weeks, there was a strike for better food. The stuff that we were getting would just keep one alive. There were 400 odd in the prison, and we were all together until the governor of the prison read the Riot Act out to us, and all but ninety-seven of us gave in to them; so we were court-martialled and I got ten years out of it, others got thirteen years, and so on.

That was the treatment meted out to a bit of a boy who enlisted at the age of

seventeen. The letter, I may say, is dated from the Park House prison, in the Isle of Wight. Our returned men will not be worthy of the name of Australian soldiers if they rest until every one of these boys is released and sent to his loved ones in Australia. During last session, I kept very quiet on the question of their treatment. When I returned, the position was critical, Germany being likely to capture Paris, and I did not utter one word to discourage any one from enlisting. To-night, however, I am free to speak the truth; and I know what these compounds are, and for what trivial offences the boys are thrown into them. When the British "Tommy" gets one or two stripes on his arm, and has Australian boys under him, they are treated with very little consideration. The life these men have to lead in the compound is beyond description, and I can well understand their revolting. I have known some of these prisoners, in the middle of winter, to have only a sack as their clothing, and they have been made to sleep without blankets, and awakened in the morning with a bucket of cold water thrown over them. The very characteristics that made this boy of whom I am speaking absent himself without leave, are those born of a love of freedom—of the spirit that made him the gallant soldier he was. These men see that the officers get about ten times as much leave as they do, and this causes them to break out sometimes; and the case of this boy is typical of many who are doing eight, ten, and thirteen years in gaol. There should not be the slightest delay on the part of the Government in bringing these boys back to Australia, and, if they are offenders, having them tried by the civil power in this country. The honorable member for Adelaide (ex-Gunner Yates) was tried by court martial here. Had he been tried by the French military authorities he would have had some semblance of fair treatment. In a similar trial in France one of the members of the Court would be a man of his own rank; but that was not so when he was tried in Australia. The Navy affords an illustration of how our men are treated. I have received a letter from the *Sydney*, at Portsmouth, regarding

the conditions on that vessel; and my correspondent tells me that this is not really an Australian Navy, because 80 per cent. of those on board are what he describes as "Pommies." He says in his letter—

Cablegram reports that the Acting Minister for the Navy has stated that the Government was confronted with a serious problem regarding the manning of the Navy, in spite of the £25 gratuity, men had refused to sign on for further period. Now, sir, there are several reasons why men will not renew their contract:—

(1) The Australian Navy is controlled and "bossed" on exactly the same principles as the British Navy? The same snobbery exists between officers and men, and the same injustice meted out.

(2) The food is bad, and we have no method of improving same other than stating a personal complaint, which results in complainant being "run in" for inciting a mutiny.

(3) Because officers are allowed wine bills, and indulge in drunken orgies, whilst the men forward are debarred from drink altogether, this being a teetotal navy. Where does the teetotal part come in? One end of the ship being "wet," and the other end "dry," and dry as a bone, at that.

Another reason why is:—Australians being in the minority, they are merely tolerated aboard their own ship. If an Australian and a "Pommy" are brought up on any trivial offence, the Australian gets the worst of it, to the great satisfaction of the "poms" in general.

Now, in view of these reasons, can you wonder why people refuse to continue with a "naval career"?

The time has arrived when we should have an Australian Navy officered by Australians. For a long time in the Australian Imperial Force every good position was given to somebody from abroad, who knew nothing more than did our own officers about the war. This war was waged under conditions different from those of any other war, and our men and officers were there just as long, and knew just as much, as did the officers and men of any other army. In the Navy there is a similar state of affairs. We are everlastingly bringing officers from the Old Country as experts and instructors, although we have as good men here as in any other part of the world. We shall have a satisfied Navy when we have officers in charge who understand Australians and how to treat them. Only the other day some boys on a war vessel in Australia were given most ferocious



sentences. Did we not enter the war to fight for freedom? Has this war, after all, been just a gigantic fraud? We set officers to try these offenders, although officers are the last people in the world who should be trusted with such a duty. All offenders of the kind ought to be tried by the civil Courts, and there is a big difference between a trial by court-martial and one in an ordinary Court.

Mr. YATES.—There is a man serving a term of two years in Darlinghurst to-day because he got drunk on his way to Australia. I have been informed that as this case has already been gone into the sentence cannot be altered.

Mr. McGRATH.—I certainly think that these are matters which claim the early and serious attention of this Parliament. There is the matter mentioned by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews). Since the armistice men have been thrown into gaol without trial. No one knows who made the charges against Freeman, or what the charges were, and it was only by adopting the extreme course of refusing to take food that he compelled the Government to consent to his being placed in one of the gaols. Such occurrences as these ought not to be tolerated, and if we on this side, though small in numbers, do our duty, there will be mightily little business done in this House until there has been inquiry made into all these cases, and the boys brought back to Australia.

People talk about "patriotism," but I am beginning to almost hate the word. There was a case in which land was offered to the Closer Settlement Board by a lady at £8 an acre, but that land she sold to a private person at £6 10s. When the Board stepped in and told the purchaser that the land was under option to the Board for a month he said that he did not know a soldier desired to have it. The owner gave another option to the Board, but not at £6 10s.; her price was £8, and the Board offered £7, and the land was subsequently sold to this "patriot" for £6 10s. There is no doubt that the word "patriotism" is being very much abused to-day. I leave all these questions in the hands of the Government, and I believe that, not only on this side, but opposite, there are hon-

orable members who will not be satisfied with an explanation, but will insist on a thorough revision of the methods of the Government and the treatment given to returned soldiers.

Mr. WEST (East Sydney) [9.27].—It is awful to think that so little interest is taken by this National Parliament in questions of public finance, although the finances are the most important topic with which we are called upon to deal. The Government have brought down proposals for Supply, and yet they leave the House absolutely in the dark as to the possibility of raising the necessary revenue. Australia at the present time is accumulating debts, and those at the head of affairs are simply raking in whatever they can get hold of, while making no provision to meet their responsibilities. If a private firm carried on its business in this way it would be liable to a criminal prosecution—and, indeed, I think the Government are deserving of a prosecution of the kind for their gross disregard of their financial responsibilities. When the Commonwealth Parliament was established one result expected was the consolidation of the debts of Australia. Yet for nearly seven months this Parliament has not been in session, although there were most urgent measures awaiting to be dealt with. We on this side were thirsting to serve our country, but honorable members opposite seem to have only one ambition—to become members of Parliament, draw their salaries, and let the country go to the devil. I have tried to find out what they are sent here for, but I cannot find a member on the Government side who is prepared to offer any proposals that will help to get us out of the present difficulty.

When Federation was brought about it was believed that one of the most important things with which the National Parliament would deal was the consolidation of the State debts, but nothing has been done; and a few months ago, when loans were falling due in New South Wales and other States, no attempt was made to meet the liabilities. Of course, the party in power in most of the State Parliaments is in sympathy with the party now in power in the Australian

Parliament, but that will be altered at the next election, and a good many of these anomalies, I hope, will be removed. Some of the States are actually paying 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. for the renewal loans floated last year or this, because the interest is 5 $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. and they were floated at 98, and some at less than that. However, no honorable member opposite seems to be at all concerned. Our children will curse the men in Parliament in these times who neglected to make provision to meet these responsibilities.

The Government have proposed a graduated scale to reduce the proportion of the Customs and Excise duties now paid to the States. At the time of the expiry of the Braddon section of the Constitution, the Labour party took the view that the 25s. *per capita* should be paid to the States for ten years only as a sort of compromise. The then Opposition, the party which is now in power in this Parliament, wanted the payment of the 25s. *per capita* to be made perpetual, but the country returned our party with a triumphant majority, and the intention then was that at the end of the ten-year period the whole of the Customs and Excise duties should go to the Commonwealth. That is the authority which should have it. It is sound financing, because the Commonwealth Parliament imposes the duties, either to raise revenue or to encourage local industries, and should be free to frame its balance-sheet to meet its own requirements. Under the present system the States have to receive a share of this revenue, and some of them have even put on super-taxes, while still expecting the Commonwealth Government to allow them to receive a share of the Customs and Excise revenue. When Federation was brought about, the State Governments should have begun to set their houses in order instead of keeping up their enormous expenditures. We are the laughing-stock of the outside world, with our fourteen Houses of Parliament, seven Governments, and seven Agents-General, with all their trimmings and paraphernalia. We have one Parliament to pass a law, and a second Parliament to tell the other fellow that he shall not

have it, and some of the Houses are not even elected by the people. I sometimes wonder what Australians are made of, and whether they understand what Democracy really means. They put me in mind of the Canadian boxer Burns, who met the coloured fighter Johnson in a contest in Australia. Burns' only qualification was that he was a little fellow and could stand a lot of hammering. The people of Australia can stand a big lot of hammering without any feeling of resentment. The various State Governments are making a clamour because the Commonwealth Government proposes to take away from them part of the Customs and Excise duties. The people always expected that they would be taken away. I took as active a part as anybody in the advocacy of Federation, and all those working with me shared my opinion that duties of Customs and Excise should go to the Commonwealth Government, because the Government that raises the revenue should have the responsibility of spending it.

This Government cannot last much longer, thank God; but I do hope that even in their dying hours they will make some attempt to deal with the question of the consolidation of our debts. They do not seem to take any interest in the matter of arranging loans when they fall due. Whatever the State Governments do in raising loans must affect the financial position of the whole of Australia, and any wrong action on their part must prejudice the credit of Australia. It has been difficult to find money, except at extraordinary interest, for some of the State loans floated recently. Honorable members should remember that for all loans raised outside of Australia the interest has to come from the wealth of Australia. It is sent abroad, and we get nothing for it. That means impoverishing the country, whereas when loans are raised within Australia, the interest is received by the people of Australia. The money simply goes out of the Treasury into the pockets of the people for them to spend next day. If a consolidation proposal were put forward, much of the money required could be found in Australia. The Government discovered during



the war that enormous sums could be raised locally. If we must have taxpayers, at least they should be in Australia, and not abroad. This question ought to exercise the mind of every honorable member, but no interest appears to be taken in it. Some members are snoozing on the Ministerial benches, and others are outside the Chamber.

I have received a booklet which bears the Government imprint, and deals with the appointment of a Commission to manage the debts of the Empire. It puts me in mind of an agreement which I was once asked to sign by a man for whom I undertook a contract. A friend of mine warned me that it was too long. He advised me never to sign a long agreement, because it was always contradictory. He said that if I signed it, I would find myself under the thumb of the other man. This proposal absolutely takes away from Parliament the control of its debts. It has not yet been explained by anybody on the other side, and at present appears to me a very dangerous document. The Japanese Government have certainly shown a point to our Government, if they are prepared to agree to a document of this sort, because there is nothing to prevent the Government of Japan from taking up a few million pounds worth of Australian stock, and drawing the interest in Japan. Members opposite evidently do not know that, and probably have not read the proposal. There is nothing in it to prevent our stock being carted all over the world. I am sure that no Australian wants that to happen. I do not believe in consolidating the debts of the whole Empire. We ought to manage our own debts, and reduce our indebtedness, while the interest on all our loans, or on as many of them as possible, should be paid to the Australian people. The Government should wake up and realize the serious financial situation. We are expecting this year an enormously heavy revenue. We have a revenue of about £39,000,000; but if we examine all our responsibilities we shall find that we are about £11,000,000 short. We should begin to set our house in order. Two years ago I pointed out that one of the responsibilities

of the Government must be to prepare for peace. I told them that the problems which peace would bring would be as great and difficult as those arising from the war; yet nothing has been done. How can we wonder, then, at the general discontent? Who is breeding this discontent? Not the people outside, who are rightly complaining, but those in political office who should have made ready adequate relief against the time when the problem was bound to arise, namely, at the end of the war. There must be some causes leading to all this dissatisfaction. A community is not discontented merely because it loves the country in which it lives, but because of some fear of a calamity such as starvation. When feelings like those are aroused, they animate attempts to bring under notice the urgent necessity for Government action; but day after day nothing is done. Members of Parliament find themselves at the four corners of the Commonwealth instead of being called together to assist in carrying relief measures, and in facing the pressing problems of the day. It is only playing with the whole subject to take one man away from a job and put a returned soldier in his place. What are the Government doing towards making Australia self-contained? The whole country seems to be going "on the drunk," and honorable members opposite seem to be assisting towards that end instead of trying to secure some amelioration. The national drift is very serious. There must be a limitation to the raising of loans. It appears to me, indeed, that certain parties in the community who have put so much money into recent loans can only have been in a position to do so by fleecing the people. In Great Britain the people can never get anything done without a riot or a bloody revolution. Then, when it reaches that stage, Parliament begins to "get a move on." This Parliament requires a revolution to awaken it to its sense of responsibility. The Government and their supporters are aware of seething discontent from one end of Australia to the other. What do they do? They call people all manner of names, from "Grasshoppers"

to Bolsheviks. What is the good of hurling names? Supporters of the Government have been away from this building for six or seven months, and they come back like a lot of dumb dogs, with muzzles over their mouths. The only hope I can see of reviving interest among them in public affairs would be to fling a book at Mr. Speaker, or to wake up this House in some similar way. I am here to represent the industrial masses of Australia, and I have to try to look after those who need help. Honorable members like the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) can look after themselves. He has been able to do so all his life, and, very likely, at the expense of somebody else; because one cannot create wealth save at the expense of others. I shall endeavour at every opportunity to instil into the supposed representatives of the people on the Government benches their heavy responsibilities in connexion with the financial position of Australia.

I desire now to refer briefly to one phase of the influenza epidemic in Sydney. There have been certain working men who, in following their occupation as Government employees, have had to go on board mail steamers and transports and men-of-war in Sydney Harbor. They have done so under official instruction, with the result that numbers of them have been stricken with the "flu," and have died. In most of these cases domestic relief has been urgently necessary. It was in the public interest that those men boarded the infected ships. The Government would be well advised, therefore, to grant pensions to the widows and children of those unfortunates who have lost their lives. There would be no precedent created if the Government were to take such action, remembering, as one does, the pension granted by Act of Parliament last year to the Federal Chief Justice.

The **TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Atkinson).—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

**Mr. RILEY** (South Sydney) [9.58].—I have no desire to block the passage of the Supply Bill. The statement of the

Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) today was very disappointing to me. Our men are returning from the war every day. When they were departing from these shores the Government said, "Now is the time to foster Australian industries and make the country self-contained." But in the past two or three years not a single industry has been established by the efforts of the Government. I ask honorable members opposite to point to one substantial industry created and fostered for the purpose of providing employment and support for our returning soldiers.

**Mr. HECTOR LAMOND**.—The wire-spinning at Port Kembla.

**Mr. RILEY**.—I doubt if that will support very many men. The war having terminated sooner than we had anticipated, the Government found themselves at the end of last year in possession of large sums of money which had been raised for war purposes. The Treasurer told us this afternoon that as the men came back they were paid off, so that our outgoings in that direction also are not what they used to be. I contend that all the unexpended moneys raised for war purposes should now be devoted to the work of repatriation. The finding of work for the men who come back should be regarded as part and parcel of our war expenditure, and these unexpended war balances should be used in providing employment for our men by the establishment of new industries. In the Ministerial statement as submitted to us this afternoon, however, there is not one solitary proposal in the direction of a vigorous industrial policy.

**Mr. PIGOTT**. — £23,000,000 for land settlement!

**Mr. RILEY**.—That is all very well for those who may desire to go on the land, but thousands of our returned soldiers wish to take up other callings which they were following before the war. The Government should have come forward with a strong, vigorous policy to provide employment for our men on reproductive works. As many honorable members have been travelling all night, I ask leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Progress reported.



## ADJOURNMENT.

**COPPER INDUSTRY: RESUMPTION OF OPERATIONS AT MOUNT MORGAN AND OTHER COPPER CENTRES—REFUSAL OF INVALID PENSION.**

Motion (by Mr. WATT) proposed—

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr. HIGGS** (Capricornia) [10.4].—I am sure that the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt), and honorable members generally, will be glad to know that, as a result of interviews which Mr. Ryan, the Premier of Queensland, and I myself have had with the board of directors of the Mount Morgan Company, the president and secretary of the Trades Hall, and officers of the Seamen's Union, the directors of the company are making arrangements to re-open the mine on Monday next. This will be glorious news for the 12,000 persons who are dependent upon the operations of the mine for a livelihood. I feel that the directors have met Mr. Ryan and myself in a very fair spirit, and that we have reason to be grateful to the officers of the Trades Hall Council and the Seamen's Union for having brought about such a happy settlement.

**Mr. HECTOR LAMOND** (Illawarra) [10.5].—I should like the Government to place in possession of the House the opinion of the Crown Law Officer which led to the denial of a pension in the circumstances stated this afternoon by the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Wallace). It was stated by him that a pension had been refused to a resident of Sydney who was incapacitated while following his calling as a seaman at Fiji, the refusal being based upon the opinion of a Crown Law Officer that the Act as it stands does not apply to Australian citizens in such circumstances. I have examined the Act—

**Mr. TUDOR.**—It is quite specific on the point. I have looked it up.

**Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.**—I do not think it is. It provides that a person to whom a pension is granted shall be a resident of Australia; not that he shall be resident here when he suffers the injury in respect of which the claim is made. At all events, I ask the Govern-

ment to place the opinion of the Crown Law Officer in the possession of the House.

**Mr. WATT** (Balaclava—Acting Prime Minister and Treasurer) [10.7].—I did not hear the speech to which the honorable member for Illawarra (Mr. Lamond) has referred, but my legal friend and colleague the Assistant Minister for Defence (Mr. Wise) is familiar with the case, and I shall avail myself of an opportunity to confer with him upon it.

I heard with very great pleasure about half-an-hour ago of the settlement of the Mount Morgan difficulty to which the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) has referred, and hailed it with the same satisfaction that he has expressed. The Government are now deliberating on measures that may induce similar action in some other important copper-raising centres. Although the circumstances of the different mines vary, and the resources of the mining companies are not in any way equal to those of the Mount Morgan Company, we are hopeful that the stoppage of production will be prevented in the near future.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

## Senate.

*Thursday, 26 June, 1919.*

The **PRESIDENT** (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

**H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA.**

**SENTENCES FOR BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE.**

**Senator GARDINER.**—I ask the Minister representing the Minister for the Navy if his attention has been drawn to the savage sentences imposed upon certain men on board *H.M.A.S. Australia* for breaches of discipline?

**Senator RUSSELL.**—I understand that the question is already on the notice-paper.

The **PRESIDENT** (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—I may explain that Senator

Gardiner's question does not appear on the notice-paper because I disallowed the word "savage," on the ground that it was comment. Senator Gardiner intimated to me that he would prefer that the question should not appear on the notice-paper to having it appear in the way I proposed. Consequently, it is in accordance with the honorable senator's wishes that his question does not appear on the paper. I regret that the honorable senator has disregarded my ruling by repeating his question without notice to-day in the form in which I took objection to it. What is not permissible in a written notice of a question is equally not permissible when the question is put without notice.

Senator GARDINER.—I may be allowed to explain that what I consider is permissible is that I should be allowed to ask my question in my own way. When I wish you, sir, to explain how I should ask a question, I shall come and ask you.

The PRESIDENT.—The Standing Orders lay down the procedure in this matter, which I am bound to follow.

### PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Papua: Annual Report for the year 1917-18.  
Sheepskins—Purchase by Imperial Government, Season 1917-18: Financial Statement, Appraisal and Disposition Statement, and Fellmongering Account.

### PRIVY COUNCIL APPEAL CASES.

Senator McDOUGALL.—I ask the Leader of the Senate whether his attention has been drawn to the result of the recent cases heard before the Privy Council in England, and, if so, have the Government considered the advisability of so altering the Constitution that the High Court of Australia may be able to decide these constitutional questions without litigants having to go abroad for decisions?

Senator MILLEN.—To what cases does the honorable senator allude?

Senator McDOUGALL.—The cases which Mr. Ryan won recently in England.

Senator MILLEN.—The honorable senator will recognise that his question is

one which I cannot answer without notice; but if he cares to give notice of it, I shall endeavour to secure an answer for it.

### FEDERAL CAPITAL.

Senator PRATTEN.—I ask the Minister representing the Prime Minister whether the Government have considered the question of the early continuation of the building of the Federal Capital at Canberra?

Senator MILLEN.—I think it is almost unnecessary to answer the question whether the Government have considered the matter. The honorable senator can rest assured on that point; but I am not in a position to-day to make any statement on the question.

Senator PRATTEN.—Arising out of the answer to my question, may I ask whether, in addition to considering the matter, the Government view favorably the early renewal of operations?

Senator MILLEN.—Having already informed the honorable senator that I am not to-day in a position to make a statement on the matter, I think he will see that his second question does not help him.

### NAVIGATION ACT.

Senator GUTHRIE asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Does the Government propose to issue the proclamations necessary to bring into effect the provisions of the Commonwealth Navigation Act before introducing the amendments forecasted by the Ministerial statement made on 25th June by Senator MilLEN?

Senator MILLEN.—No; but it is hoped shortly to announce the date when the Navigation Bill will be proclaimed.

### MINISTERS IN LONDON.

#### COST OF COMMUNICATION.

Senator NEEDHAM asked the Minister representing the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

What has been the cost to the Commonwealth for radiograms and cablegrams between the Commonwealth Government and (a) the Prime Minister, the Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C., M.P.; (b) the Minister for the Navy, the Right Honorable Sir Joseph



Cook, P.C., M.P.; and (c) Senator the Honorable George Foster Pearce, Minister for Defence, during their respective periods of absence from Australia?

Senator MILLEN.—The information will be supplied in proper form if the honorable senator moves for a return, which, however, will take some time to compile.

## AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

### SENATOR PEARCE AND DEMOBILIZATION.

Senator NEEDHAM asked the Acting Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. What was the date of the departure of Senator Pearce, Minister for Defence, for London to act as Minister for Demobilization?

2. How many members of the Australian Imperial Force had returned to Australia at that date?

3. How many were *en route* to Australia at that date?

4. What was the date of the arrival in London of Senator Pearce as Minister for Demobilization?

5. How many members of the Australian Imperial Force had returned, or were *en route*, to Australia, at that date?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers are:—

1. 26th January, 1919.

2. 96,854.

3. 24,780, approximately.

4. 19th March, 1919.

5. Returned, 121,634; *en route*, 16,120; total, 137,754.

Senator NEEDHAM asked the Acting Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. What was the cost to the Commonwealth of conveying the Minister for Defence and his wife and family to London?

2. What was the cost to the Commonwealth of conveying 40 clerks from the Pay Branch of the Australian Imperial Force, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, to London?

3. What was the nature of the work these 40 clerks were expected to perform in London?

4. Could not 40 members of the fighting ranks of the Australian Imperial Force, either abroad or who had returned to Australia, have been found competent to carry out this work?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers are:—

1. £275.

2. The number is 27, not 40. Cost £775.

3. To investigate and reconcile, by means of data prepared by and carried with them, discrepancies inevitable under war conditions between active pay, allotment, and separation allowance records in Australia, and similar records of the Pay Offices abroad, which discrepancies would otherwise have caused heavy

losses to the Government, hardship to the soldier and his dependants, and seriously delayed final payments upon discharge.

4. The number is not 40, but 27. A large proportion of the number are either returned soldiers, or persons medically unfit for fighting. The selections were necessarily confined to those who had been employed for many months on the intricate work of preparation.

## WHEAT POOL.

### CORNSACKS.

Senator LYNCH asked the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. What sized parcel of cornsacks was carried over from last year, and in the hands of the Government?

2. How was such parcel disposed of?

3. What were the conditions governing its disposal?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers are—

1. Approximately 30,561 bales of cornsacks were carried over by the Government. Of these approximately 3,337 bales had arrived at the end of last year. About 9,000 bales are to be shipped in July, August, and September next.

2. By the acceptance of offers received from regular traders in cornsacks.

3. The ordinary conditions of trade.

## SHEEP DIPS.

### PROHIBITION OF IMPORTATION.

Senator KEATING asked the Minister representing the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Is there a prohibition in force against the importation into the Commonwealth of sheep dips?

2. If so, under what authority?

3. Upon what grounds?

4. If intended for the protection of local manufacturers, is the like system applied to any (and what) other classes of goods?

5. Is there any special reason or reasons for this exceptional form of protection?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers to the honorable senator's question are very lengthy, and perhaps it would be better if I laid the paper on the table.

Senator KEATING.—May I ask whether the reply is bunched for the five questions, or whether the lengthy part of it is in relation to one or more of them? If some of them are answered succinctly the Minister might give those answers, and as regards the others the statement might be laid on the table.

Senator RUSSELL.—Two of the questions are answered briefly.

Senator KEATING.—Will the answers to my questions appear in *Hansard*?

The PRESIDENT.—Nothing will appear in *Hansard* that is not read.

Senator KEATING.—As these are rather important questions, the answers to which should, I think, appear in *Hansard*, I hope that the document will be read.

The PRESIDENT.—The rule regarding *Hansard* is that it must be a correct record of everything that it said and done in the Senate. If the answers to the honorable senator's questions are not read, they will not appear in *Hansard*.

Senator KEATING.—Then, sir, I ask that the answers to my question be read.

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers are as follow:—

1. Yes.

2. Section 52 of the Customs Act 1901-1916.

3. The circumstances under which the prohibition of importation became necessary were as follows:—

Towards the end of 1917, owing to the lack of shipping facilities, the position with regard to the supply of sheep dip was becoming acute, and the wool producing interests which were dependent on supplies of dip from overseas were threatened with serious loss—

Senator GARDINER.—I rise to a point of order. I ask your ruling, sir, as to whether the Acting Minister for Defence (Senator Russell) is not transgressing our Standing Orders by supplying, not merely answers to questions, but reasons also.

The PRESIDENT.—Whilst the Acting Minister has not progressed sufficiently far in his reply to enable me to form a very mature judgment on the matter, it does seem to me that the objection raised by Senator Gardiner is well founded. The rule that applies to the asking of questions applies equally to the answering of them. The answers to questions should merely give information, and should not contain any arguments or comments. Consequently, I rule that the reply of the Acting Minister for Defence is out of order. In so ruling, however, I would point out that there is nothing to prevent the honorable gentleman from laying any paper on the table of the Senate.

Senator MILLEN.—Without in any way questioning your ruling, sir, which, if I may say so, I quite indorse, I would invite your attention to the fact that honorable senators frequently put Ministers in a most awkward position by reason of the way in which their questions are framed. For example, the particular question which has given rise to this discussion asks "upon what grounds" certain action has been taken. The Minister is thus placed in the position either of laying himself open to a charge of discourtesy by declining to give the information desired, or of transgressing the Standing Orders in the way that you have pointed out.

The PRESIDENT.—The proper course is for the Minister to lay the paper on the table of the Senate.

Senator GUTHRIE.—May I point out in regard to question No. 1—

The PRESIDENT.—The honorable senator must resume his seat.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I am only asking for information.

The PRESIDENT.—The honorable senator is not entitled to do that. There can be no debate at this stage unless my ruling is challenged.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Suppose that I put it in this way—

The PRESIDENT.—Order! The honorable senator is not entitled to do that. The only question which can be put arising out of an answer is a question without notice.

Senator GUTHRIE.—Well, I want—

The PRESIDENT.—Order! The honorable senator must resume his seat. Unless he is about to challenge my ruling he must resume his seat.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I am not doing that.

The PRESIDENT.—Then the honorable senator is not entitled to make any remarks.

Senator GUTHRIE.—I think, sir, that you have placed an absolutely wrong construction upon my meaning. It is my intention—

The PRESIDENT.—Order! Will the honorable senator resume his seat. It does not matter what are his intentions. They may be the most admirable in the world, but he is nevertheless out of order.



Senator KEATING.—I understand that the Acting Minister for Defence will lay the paper on the table of the Senate at the proper time.

The PRESIDENT.—The honorable gentleman may lay the paper on the table at any time.

## OIL.

### DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES.

Senator KEATING asked the Minister representing the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

1. In connexion with proposals for the development of the petroleum and other oil resources of the Commonwealth, how many applications have been made to the Treasurer during the financial years 1914-1919 for permission to form companies or raise capital?  
2. How many of such applications have been refused?

3. How many have been granted or are under consideration?

Senator MILLEN.—The answers are—

1. Twenty-six.
2. Twelve.
3. Fourteen.

(The above refers to the applications made since 26th January, 1916 (when Treasury control of capital issued commenced), to 23rd June, 1919.)

## COMMONWEALTH STEAMSHIPS.

Senator O'KEEFE asked the Minister in Charge of Shipping, *upon notice*—

Will he lay on the table of the Senate a statement showing—

1. Where the Commonwealth-owned ships have been engaged?
2. Their purchase price, including all commissions (if any).
3. The profits (if any) made by the ships?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers to the honorable senator's questions are as follow:—

1. The vessels of the Commonwealth Government line have been employed in bringing imports into Australia and carrying therefrom the products of Australia. In the absence of opportunity to secure full cargoes for every vessel from the United Kingdom to Australia, intermediate voyages have been made, in some instances, by vessels *en route* to Australia.

2. Net cost, £2,047,900. The total commission paid by the Commonwealth Government to the firm of Turner, Davidson, and Company was £4,500. As against this, the Commonwealth Government received £20,100, the sellers' commission ordinarily paid to the

brokers by the owners; or, in other words, the total amount paid for the ships was less by £15,600 than the price agreed upon after allowing for the commission to the Government brokers.

3. A balance-sheet will be laid on the table of the House at an early date.

## HENDERSON NAVAL BASE.

### SUSPENSION OF OPERATIONS.

Senator NEEDHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

1. What steps, if any, are being taken to procure other employment for the sixty-six returned soldiers at present employed on the Henderson Naval Base, Fremantle, when operations are suspended?

2. What steps, if any, do the Government intend to take to draft all the employees on the Henderson Naval Base, Fremantle, into other channels of employment when operations are suspended, so as to ease the strain on the labour market?

Senator RUSSELL.—The answers are—

The Minister for Works and Railways informs me that the honorable senator gave notice of this question at the end of last session, and there not being an opportunity of answering it in the House, a letter was sent to him on 24th January last explaining the position, which was—that owing to suspension of work pending report of expert on Naval Bases, the officer-in-charge at Henderson Naval Base was instructed to reduce staff to minimum, consistent with dredging work required, and in doing so to give preference to the retention of the services of returned soldiers.

## POST OFFICE AT SEVEN HILLS.

Notice of motion (Senator GRANT's) withdrawn.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Motion (by Senator O'KEEFE) agreed to—

That two months' leave of absence be granted to Senator Guy on the ground of ill-health.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY (ADMINISTRATION) BILL.

Motion (by Senator RUSSELL) agreed to—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend section 6 of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910.

## LIGHTHOUSES BILL.

Motion (by Senator RUSSELL) agreed to—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Lighthouses Act 1911.

Bill presented, and read a first time.

## TRADE MARKS BILL.

Motion (by Senator RUSSELL) agreed to—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Trade Marks Act 1905-1912.

## ALIENS REGISTRATION BILL.

Motion (by Senator RUSSELL) agreed to—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act relating to the registration of aliens.

## COMMONWEALTH RENTS IN MELBOURNE.

Motion (by Senator FOLL) agreed to—

That a detailed return be supplied showing the total amount of rent paid by the Government for each Department in Melbourne, including the Parliament.

## WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY BILL.

Senator RUSSELL (Victoria—Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.26].—I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend section 2 of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905-1915.

I feel sure that Senator Gardiner, in objecting to this motion being taken as formal, must have been under some misapprehension in regard to the character and nature of the Bill, which is purely technical. In the drafting of the Wireless Telegraphy Act the word "telephonic" was omitted, and, I understand, there is a distinction between wireless telegraphy and wireless telephony. The alteration now proposed is with the object of making the Act quite understandable and to cover all necessary purposes. Seeing that no principle is involved, I ask the honorable senator not to press his objection to the motion.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [3.27].—My only objection to the motion being taken as formal was, that I desired some information, because I realize the formidable nature of the

financial organizations known as the Marconi, the Telefunken German Company, and the Australian Wireless, which are practically one concern, and I know the pernicious influence which they are exercising over the Government, and their danger to the interests of the people of this country. I cannot understand why wireless telegraphy is not handled by the Government as a monopoly in the same manner as the telegraph and telephone services are controlled, and I was anxious to get information, at the start of this business, in order that members may know what is going on. Too long have I accepted with confidence statements and assurances from Ministers. That was my reason for asking that this matter be not taken as formal. From Senator Russell's statement, which I have no reason to doubt—

Senator RUSSELL.—I will make a full statement on the second reading.

Senator GARDINER.—I can see that my suspicions were probably not justified. I have no wish to delay Government business, but I hope that honorable senators will be alert in regard to any measure that may come along seeking to confer unwarranted power upon the wireless companies.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill presented, and read a first time.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Debate resumed from 25th June (*vide* page 10014), on motion by Senator MILLEN—

That the paper be printed.

Senator GARDINER (New South Wales) [3.29].—I just want to say, so as not to take honorable senators by surprise—particularly those on the other side who may desire to speak upon the motion—that it will be as well if they hold themselves in readiness to speak, as probably I shall not occupy as much time as I ordinarily devote to an important paper of this character. I have been informed—whether credibly or not I cannot say—that senators opposite have been ordered not to make any speeches; but lest they put the blame on me for any break of the debate, I warn them now that I do not anticipate speaking for any great length of time.



Senator NEWLAND.—Members of your party are the only ones who obey orders like that to which you refer.

Senator GARDINER.—I am glad to have a party that obeys orders, but I am sorry to think that, so early in the session, I have raised the anger of the honorable senator, as I hoped that the closing session of our joint appearance in this Chamber might have been a peaceful one. I do not remember any occasion in the history of this or any other Parliament as important as the present. I do not remember any document so full of verbiage and yet containing so little with which to give satisfaction as that read yesterday by Senator Milten.

Senator MILLEN.—You made the same remark in commenting upon a previous document of the same nature.

Senator GARDINER.—A good thing cannot be said too often. That, however, is one of the misstatements which Senator Milten is in the habit of making. I challenge him to find anything in any previous remarks of mine resembling that statement. This document is most disappointing. It is more than that. It is the most serious evidence of the ineptitude of the Government that has ever been placed before Parliament.

I do not wish to traverse a tremendous breadth of ground to-day, or to occupy as much time as some honorable senators may expect me to do; but I can, and shall, in a few words, deal with Senator Milten and his attitude toward the subject of repatriation. If any honorable senators who have listened to the facts and figures put forward by the Minister have come to the conclusion that everything is all right, and going splendidly, and that the Department represents a magnificent achievement in the creation of something without precedent, then my only comment is that those honorable senators must, in their hearts, know far better. Things are not all right with our repatriated soldiers.

Senator Colonel ROWELL.—Things never will be all right with some of them.

Senator GARDINER.—I know that is so. I recently read a definition of an optimist. That individual, according to

a caricature which I have in mind, was described as one who, falling from the top of a ten-story building, at every window he passed on his way to the pavement was heard to say, "All's well, so far." I had thought that that was merely a caricature; but, when listening to Senator Milten speaking upon the subject of repatriation, I realized that I was face to face with an optimistic gentleman who, as he passed each window upon his downward fall, was crying out, "All's well, so far." All is not well in the matter of repatriation, and the sooner that is realized by the Minister, the Government, the Parliament, and the public, the better it will be for Australia and her returned soldiers. My reasons for holding that view are so numerous that I am physically unfitted for stating them, and could not do so were I to speak for ten hours.

Senator NEWLAND.—Give us just one reason, and we will let you off the rest.

Senator GARDINER.—I will give a good one. In December last year Parliament passed a measure inaugurating a housing scheme for repatriated soldiers. In that Bill it was provided that millions of pounds sterling might be so spent. An individual was appointed to carry out the work, and a high salary was granted to him. But not one brick has been laid to-day for the establishment of a home for a returned soldier.

Senator SENIOR.—That is not correct.

Senator GARDINER.—I will leave it to the Minister to say whether it is or not. In my State, at any rate, not one brick has been placed upon another in such a cause.

Senator NEWLAND.—If the honorable senator has nothing worse than that belief to bring against the Department, it certainly is all right.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—We have passed that window.

Senator GARDINER.—Yes; and the magnificent optimists sitting on the opposite side of the chamber are content; but I warn them that we may all bump the pavement together. Optimism, which does not realize its failings and cannot be aroused from its self-satisfaction, is highly dangerous.

Senator SENIOR.—I will show the honorable senator facts to disprove his assertions.

Senator GARDINER.—I will welcome them. Since this is a continuous session I presume I may be permitted to refer to remarks which I made when discussing the Minister for Repatriation and his Department. In December last year, shortly before the adjournment of Parliament, Senator Millen stated—

Coming now to Senator Gardiner's very praiseworthy efforts to fan the flame of mystery-mongering which seems to be running throughout this country just now, I can say that no difficulty need be experienced, and no very heroic efforts required to make mystery about anything. All this mystery has simply been conjured up by journalists, or others who have spread the rumours, and on this have charged the Government with want of frankness because they have not made any declaration concerning things which do not exist. That is exactly the position in regard to this case.

Those references by Senator Millen had to do with my questions concerning the rumoured departure of Senator Pearce for England. The report of the proceedings continues:—

Senator GARDINER.—I asked if Senator Pearce was going to London. I think three Ministers there are not required.

Senator MILLEN.—The position is this: Senator Gardiner himself referred to certain rumours, and upon these rumours he proceeded, in his well-known and vigorous manner, to belabour the Government for not having told the people about things which are mere rumours. But there is something more. The Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) has already made a clear and definite statement on this very subject, and nothing has transpired since then to justify any one in suggesting that there is any mystery, or that the Government are suppressing anything. I may add, as Senator Gardiner has put a specific question, that Senator Pearce informs me that he certainly has not booked his passage to London. He does not know whether any one else has done so for him; but that is very unlikely. And, as to the officers who, it is alleged, he is taking with him, possibly that rumour arose from the fact that certain officers of the Australian Imperial Force on leave in Australia are returning to re-join their regiments. It does not require a very lively imagination for those who are out to create mystery to assume that these men were booking their passages as a kind of staff to the Minister.

Senator GARDINER.—Is the Minister for Defence going to England?

Senator MILLEN.—The Acting Prime Minister's statement in that regard still stands.

Senator GARDINER.—Is the Minister for Defence going to England?

Senator MILLEN.—At present there is no such arrangement. I do not want to be offensive; but I cannot help saying that, after the Acting Prime Minister has made a definite statement on this subject, it is hardly decent, and certainly does not add to the decency of public life, to have that statement questioned, and doubt thrown on the veracity of the acting head of the Government.

Senator GARDINER.—You have not answered my question. I am not talking of Ministers in the other House. Surely we are entitled to an answer to these public questions. I want to know if the Minister for Defence is going or not.

Senator MILLEN.—If the honorable senator means for all eternity, I cannot say. But if he asks me this question: "Have the Government arranged for Senator Pearce to go to London?" the answer is "No."

Senator GARDINER.—That is satisfactory. Thank you.

Senator MILLEN. I can only again refer the honorable senator to the lengthy statement made by the Acting Prime Minister.

I do not pretend to be able to understand the Minister for Repatriation, but if those remarks did not convey that the rumours upon which I was basing my questions were backed by facts—

Senator MILLEN.—You asked a specific question, and you got a definite answer.

Senator GARDINER.—If they did not convey that my questions were based upon newspaper reports and rumours which were groundless, then I shall never hope to be able to understand the Minister. His whole remarks constituted a shameless disregard for the decencies of public life. An honorable senator is blamed for persistently asking a question. He is accused of not believing an assertion by the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt). And then, when Parliament rises, this country is informed of exactly what newspaper reports and rumours foreshadowed, namely, that the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) did go somewhere. Where did he go? Senator Pearce is not here to-day. As a matter of fact, I believe that in the closing hours of the session a Ministerial statement was uttered on the subject, but it was at a time when most members of Parliament were returning to their homes for Christmas. The Government—and not myself—were the creators of mystery. I repeat, "Where is Senator Pearce to-day?" I have before me a long and considerable



document which has been placed before Parliament regarding the business proposals of the Government. I have had little time to study it, but have failed to find the name of Senator Pearce within it. There is no mention of his absence from the chamber.

Senator REID.—Yes, there is a paragraph relating to it.

Senator GARDINER.—Perhaps the honorable senator will tell me where I will find it. I have one paragraph marked which hints at Senator Pearce. Referring to the task of demobilization the statement says:—

The success which is attending this great task amply confirms the step taken by the Government in placing the work in the hands of a responsible Minister in London.

Does that refer to Senator Pearce?

Senator REID.—I thought so when I read it.

Senator GARDINER.—If, like little Jack Horner, one opens his mouth and shuts his eyes he can be satisfied with anything. I say that the mystery was created by the Government. A week before Parliament went into recess they made deliberate attempts to suggest that Senator Pearce was not going to London. If it is a fact that the honorable senator did go to England, and is responsible for the demobilization of our troops being carried out successfully, then I can only say that I would not care to have as colleagues men who would in such circumstances keep my name out of an official document such as this. Did the honorable senator go to England? Will Ministers inform Parliament whether he did or not, or am I impertinent in asking the question? Is he the Minister, in London responsible for the very successful demobilization scheme to which reference is made? If he is, the public are entitled to the information. The mystery is with the Government. Senator Reid has assumed that Senator Pearce is the Minister in London responsible for the success of demobilization, but I may just as well assume that the reference is to Sir Joseph Cook, Minister for the Navy. For all I know, he is the Minister responsible for the rapid demobilization of our troops. If the demobilization is as rapid as is suggested by the very optimistic Leader of the Senate, I rejoice with the honorable

senator. The Government will not find me complaining of the good work which they do, though I have to complain of their bad work. I again direct attention to the deliberate mystery with which the Government surrounded the departure of Senator Pearce. I based certain questions on private information in my possession as to whether Senator Pearce's passage had been booked. Though the facts suggested in my questions based on rumour were absolutely true, I received direct negatives from Senator Millen to those questions. Almost up to the very close of the last sittings of the Senate it was announced that Senator Pearce was not going to England. Now it appears that he did go, and if the passage which I have quoted from the Ministerial statement refers to him he is doing good work in connexion with the demobilization of our troops, but his name is not allowed to appear in an official document announcing the success of the demobilization scheme to Parliament. That is the business of the Government. Senator Pearce may not have done work sufficiently good to justify the mention of his name in this document, but we should know where he is and what he is doing. One can scarcely accept any statement which appears in the newspapers lest he should be accused of acting merely upon rumour.

The Government have submitted a very lengthy Ministerial statement. I do not intend to go through the paragraphs of it seriatim. I direct attention, however, to one important paragraph, which reads:—

The Government have prepared and forwarded, for the consideration of the Governments of Britain and the Dominions, a scheme providing for the administration, conversion, and extinction of the war debts of the Empire.

I venture to say that a scheme of that character might very well be tabled in the Senate. I have no doubt that it is an absolutely perfect scheme, since the Government have prepared it, and have considered it worthy to be sent to the Government of Britain. It must be a magnificent scheme, and I am wondering whether we shall be allowed to have a look at it. In the various States we represent a great many of the people of the Commonwealth, and I think that we are entitled to know something about a

scheme of such pretensions. The Minister was not limited to time yesterday, and he might have put this scheme before the Senate. One of the chief functions of Parliament is to inform the nation. Is this scheme so magnificent that the Government must keep it in the dark? Apparently, the British Government is to have an opportunity of considering it, but the Australian Parliament must know nothing about it. I do not blame the Government in the matter, because perhaps no more could have been expected from a Government with a following sufficiently servile to make no demands for information for their constituents. Under the party system, Governments have developed in such a way that when the mouthpiece of a Ministry speaks the followers hold their peace and listen with bated breath. They do not speak lest they should arouse opposition to the Government. I have not the slightest doubt that the Ministerial Caucus knows what this scheme is, though the rest of Australia is to know nothing about it.

Senator PRATTEN.—Has the honorable senator not seen the scheme in print?

Senator GARDINER.—In view of the way in which I was upbraided by Senator Milten for referring to something I had seen in print in the earlier stages of the session, I hesitate to again refer to what I have seen in print; but I venture to suggest that this is the one place in which we should be given information about this scheme.

Senator PRATTEN.—Has not the scheme been circulated amongst honorable senators?

Senator GARDINER.—I am not aware that it has, but I should object even to that method of giving it publicity. If the scheme is of sufficient importance to justify its being printed and distributed amongst members of this Parliament, there is no earthly reason why it should not be made known to the Senate. The Ministerial statement was put before us for discussion, and in it there is a reference to a scheme suggesting a possibility at which the imagination almost reels, and that is the extinction of our national debts. We could welcome a scheme like that.

Senator PRATTEN.—The honorable gentleman has apparently not read it.

Senator GARDINER.—I have not read it. I do not belong to the Ministerial Caucus, and have not seen the scheme in print.

Senator PRATTEN.—The honorable senator has had the same opportunity to see it as we have had.

Senator GARDINER.—Then my honorable friends opposite did not have the matter discussed in Caucus. Senator Pratten smiles with a smile that is child-like and bland, but I am too good a Caucus man to try to force Caucus secrets from the honorable senator. A scheme proposing the extinction of the Empire's debts is one which might well engage the attention of the Senate, and might have been submitted to it. Are we to have it submitted to us? We are not told that we are, but we are informed that it has been submitted to the British Government. If it is a good scheme to provide for the extinction of the Empire's debts, Australia, in submitting it, will be doing as creditably as she did during the war, and this scheme must be of sufficient importance to have warranted the Government calling Parliament together to submit it to Parliament before it was sent to Britain. With the approval of this Parliament, the scheme would have a great deal more weight than it can possibly have when sent to Great Britain by the Government during recess, and before it has been submitted to Parliament.

We were informed the other day by the Acting Prime Minister that peace had been signed. I do not blame him for a mistake in a wireless communication. It may not be a mistake, and it is possible that peace has already been signed. But I venture to say that if it has, or if we are on the eve of the signing of peace, this Government takes an event of this magnitude with a calmness that must be considered creditable to Australia. Parliament meets, and the references to the matter are of the vaguest character. There is nothing in them to stir or thrill the community. In the coldest platitudes the Government informed Parliament and the nation of the greatest event in our lifetime, and possibly in the history of



the world. A glorious peace is achieved after an awful war. Australia can rejoice in the peace whole-heartedly, as her people have done more than their share in the great struggle in proportion to their numbers and their wealth. There can be no question about that. When we survey what has occurred in this country from the day war was declared until the signing of the armistice or the signing of peace, if peace has been signed, there is no man in Australia who may not feel a thrill of pride in the fact that in the provision of man power and money for the prosecution of the war, this, the youngest nation of the world, has done nobly and well. There has been a good deal of political bitterness, some trying to discredit others, and using the usual political weapon as to what they were and what they were not; but we have reason to be satisfied when, forgetting the past bitterness, we survey the operations of the war in the calm light of peace. Our future is no longer imperilled. We can see the dawn of a long day of peace breaking in the eastern skies, and can anticipate that the same energy, the same courage, and the same resourcefulness that enabled Australia to do her share so well in the war will enable her to recover from the awful effects and aftermath of the war. The day is breaking now, and I commend the Government that they do not propose that the populace should be overstimulated, and so refer in the coldest of platitudes to the glorious events that are now happening.

There was a distinct cleavage between political parties during the war. For the first two years there was no party in Australia, and in man power and military effort this country exceeded the expectations of its most hopeful citizens, and did more than any one dreamed it would be able to do in such a titanic struggle. I might sum the matter up by saying that in two years from the declaration of war, when the management of the country had been for the first five weeks or so in the hands of a Liberal Government, and for the remaining period in the hands of the Fisher and the Hughes Governments, Australia had transported overseas more

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than 266,000 men. That was a mighty effort. We sent that number of men to the other side, and they were men who willingly offered themselves in the great struggle for the continuance of human civilization, freedom, and the rights of nations to govern themselves.

So far as political parties are concerned, the duration of the war might be divided into two-year periods. At the end of the first two years there came into existence in this country a powerful movement running through all parties, because men became imbued with what I held at the time, and still hold to have been, the wrong view that we were not in Australia doing enough, and conscription was necessary to force us to do more. We all know the disastrous division which took place in public opinion when the Hughes Government persisted in calling up 31,000 of our young men in October, 1916, to cover the September and October drafts, and expressed their intention thereafter to send 16,500 men monthly to the Front. Fortunately, the people, realizing what we had already done, and recognising that every legitimate effort had been made to insure a constant stream of reinforcements, prevented the Government from giving effect to their scheme. I am not going to blame those who thought differently from me on this question. I am not going to sit in judgment upon them; but because of the vigour with which they put their case, I propose to justify the attitude which I adopted on that occasion by quoting some figures which were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 9th May last, relating to the casualties sustained by Allied belligerent countries during the war. These figures show that the British Empire mobilized 8,000,000 men, and lost during the war 852,024. The figures for the Australian mobilization are not given, but from a statement made by the Defence Department, I learn that the men who answered the call to the colours numbered 428,000. The deaths which occurred in the Australian ranks from wounds, in battle, and otherwise, amounted to the enormous total of 58,000.

Senator Lt.-Colonel O'LOGLIN.—Up to what date?

Senator GARDINER.—Up to the end of March. During the same period, the Canadian Forces lost 35,138 killed. In studying these figures, we have to realize that Canada is a great deal nearer to the theatre of war than is Australia. It is practically distant from it fewer days than we are weeks. Yet Canada, which conscripted her people, lost only 35,000 men by death; whereas Australia, unfortunately, has to mourn the loss of more than 58,000 dead.

Senator Lt.-Colonel O'LOUGHLIN.—And Canada has a 60 per cent. larger population.

Senator GARDINER. — Precisely. Canada also had conscription. Further, she secured huge contracts from the Imperial authorities, which enabled her to carry on successfully. Then, again, Australia paid her own Forces from the day they enlisted, all through the fighting and until their return home. She also paid for all the ammunition which they fired away. On the other hand, Canada's Forces, from the date of their embarkation, were paid by the British Government. These facts ought to be known.

Senator FAIRBAIRN. — We ought to know about them.

Senator GARDINER.—We ought to know about them, because when it comes to repayment for losses incurred, if we have a legitimate claim for a higher amount than Canada, we ought to get it. France mobilized 7,000,000 men, and lost by death 1,385,000.

Senator LYNCH.—Does the honorable senator know the special reason which operated in the case of Canada, and which explains why she did not send a greater force than she did?

Senator GARDINER.—I do not. If the honorable senator knows, he is at liberty to mention it when he speaks. The United States of America mobilized 3,500,000, and lost by death, 36,154. Italy mobilized 5,500,000, and lost by death 460,000. Belgium mobilized 267,000 men, and her death toll amounted to 20,000. Russia mobilized 12,000,000 men, and lost by death 1,700,000. Japan mobilized 800,000 men, and lost by death 300. Roumania mobilized 750,000 men, and her deaths total 200,000. Servia mobilized 707,000 men, and sustained losses by death amounting to 320,000.

Montenegro mobilized 50,000 men, and lost by death 3,000. Greece mobilized 230,000 men, and her losses by death were 15,000. Portugal mobilized 100,000 men, and lost by death 4,000. I may add that the Western Australian *Worker* sets the losses by death sustained by the Belgian Forces at 16,000. But, for the purposes of comparison, I am prepared to accept the higher figures, and to assume that Belgium lost 20,000 men. That country mobilized an army of 267,000, whereas Australia mobilized an army of 415,000. Australia sent considerably over 300,000 men to the Front, and had fighting in Belgium to resent the breach of Belgium's neutrality by the Germans when they invaded that country a greater army than the Belgians themselves. Not only did Australia do that, but for every man lost by Belgium, Australia mourns the loss of three of her sons.

Senator Colonel ROWELL.—That was a matter of circumstance. They were on the defensive.

Senator GARDINER.—It was a matter of circumstances, and now, in the calm light of peace, this comparison which I have instituted should be vividly kept in mind, particularly by those who were anxious that we should do more than we did. They used to taunt our party with Mr. Fisher's statement that we would stand by the Empire in this momentous struggle to the last man and the last shilling. I say that literally we adhered to the pledge. We stripped ourselves of our manhood to such an extent that we would have been powerless had we been attacked. So far as the last shilling is concerned, not only did we spend it, but we borrowed money upon which we shall have to pay an annual interest bill of from £20,000,000 to £30,000,000. I have gone to the trouble of putting these facts and figures before honorable senators because I think that they should be placed upon record. At the outbreak of the war it looked as if nothing could prevent the foe from winning. At that time Germany appeared to be a world-conquering force, whose objective was the domination of civilization. As one who has given this matter very serious study, and who feels deeply, I say unhesitatingly that it was more than a human



power which beat the Germans during the first six months of the struggle. If ever the intervention of Divine Providence was manifested in the affairs of mankind it was manifested then. When the ruthless rush of the Germans took place in March, 1918, and the destiny of nations trembled in the balance, we who read of the doings of that time and the succeeding two or three months, stood wondering why this mighty military force had not conquered France at the very outset of the war. Unquestionably it was Divine Providence that saved civilization, and I am content to leave it at that.

Now we are confronted with the Peace proposals, and I know that there will be much diversity of opinion as to what should be done. "The culprit must be punished," will be the thought that will instinctively rise to the mind of every man. If the culprit could be centred in one man or even in a number of individuals there is no doubt that civilization would insist upon their punishment. But an enduring peace cannot be obtained unless it is based upon justice. Without justice we shall be sowing the seeds of future discord. Of course it may be argued that no consideration should be extended to men who were guilty of the acts of which our enemy were guilty. But the people who will govern Germany and Austria in the future will not be those who created this war. When it is urged that they indorsed the war my reply is that the first duty of citizenship is to offer one's life if necessary in the defence of his country. In the hour of danger the first duty of a citizen is to fight for the country in which he lives. If we accept that maxim none of us can punish the German soldiery for fighting for their country. We may insist upon reparation being made for the wrong which has been done, but with sentiments like those in our hearts we cannot say that the men who answered the call in Germany were doing other than their duty to their own nation. These truths must be kept in mind in the peace that is now being forced upon the world whether by the strong arm of the military power or by wise counsels at the council table. I believe that Peace has

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been signed, and that the German people will, if they have agreed to certain proposals, carry them out. We have only to look back to the occasion when Germany conquered France in 1870 and 1871. I suppose that the most powerful German statesman at that time was Bismarck. Bismarck was forced by the pressure of public opinion in Germany to assent to an unjust peace, a peace that took much territory from France. He himself pointed out the dangers attendant on a peace that would leave France with a lasting grievance, and that, I believe, was one of the real causes of the present war. Probably that was the germ—a nation proud in arms as France was, being humiliated by cession of territory—that was responsible for this awful world conflict. Let us beware that history does not repeat itself. Let us beware that in the hour of our triumph, we do not seek to impose upon Germany an unjust peace that will leave a lasting grievance in the minds of the conquered.

Senator COLONEL ROWELL.—Then would you advocate giving the Pacific Islands back to Germany?

Senator GARDINER.—I am not going into the details of what I would advocate, and I do not think the honorable senator wants me to do so. But, so far as the Pacific Islands are concerned, and as far as I can read of proposals for balancing compensation, I believe that hitherto too much attention has been given to trade, and too little attention to humanity. Trade is all in all with the men who draft these arrangements.

Senator MILLEN.—Are you referring to President Wilson when you speak of trade as being the predominant note?

Senator GARDINER.—We have much to thank President Wilson for. I believe that his peace proposals, when they became known in Germany, materially helped to break down German resistance, because they believed that it was not the ambition of the Allied nations to wipe Germany and her people off the map, but that, on the contrary, there was a sweet reasonableness about Germany's antagonists, and a possibility of a peace based upon justice, with reparation and restoration for damage done.

Senator FOLL.—If Foch had been in charge for three weeks longer, we would

have heard nothing about the fourteen points.

Senator GARDINER.—I am not going into a discussion as to the conditions of peace. Surely we can dissociate ourselves from our own interests sufficiently to realize what are the possibilities, and how we would kick against unjust conditions of peace if any conqueror sought to impose them upon us?

Senator NEWLAND.—If Germany had won we might have been kicking without much effect.

Senator GARDINER.—Exactly. And from my long experience of Senator Newland, I know quite well that although he might be conquered in a struggle, his spirit would still be sufficiently strong and his resolution sufficiently firm to resist to the very last against what he thought were harsh conditions. And I venture to say that even if a mighty nation like Germany is conquered, we must see to it that the conditions to be imposed are sufficiently just to make the peace a lasting one. It is impossible to obliterate 70,000,000 of people the equal in intelligence and education of any other people in the world. So far as their system of government is concerned, they were so satisfied it was superior to that of any other, that they sought to impose it upon the rest of mankind. I say that we cannot wipe out a people of that character, and so far as I can learn, nobody wants to do so. Nobody wants to do the impossible. In the hour of our triumph we can show that we are as great in peace as our men proved themselves great in war. That should be the aim of all the nations, and particularly the conquerors in this great struggle. We must so comport ourselves that, in the conditions of the peace imposed upon Germany, there shall be no suspicion of injustice.

I will now leave what I may call these large matters of State, which occupy first place in the minds of the people, and turn to what our own Government are doing. As a British people—but I would rather regard myself as an Australian—we pride ourselves that what is best in us comes from the Old Land. We claim that our system of justice and freedom surpasses that of any other nation. There is one principle of justice that dates from

1215, when King John signed the Magna Charta, which insures that no man shall be kept in prison except after trial by a jury of his peers. Are we trying to live up to that principle? I think not. When Senator Grant yesterday brought before the Senate the treatment meted out to a citizen of America—

Senator GUTHRIE.—Is he one?

Senator GARDINER.—Well, Senator Russell yesterday flourished a sworn statement, made by this man, to the effect that he was an American citizen, and if he is not, then the Minister has a splendid opportunity of laying an information against him. This citizen of America to whom I am referring was taken from his civil occupation, placed upon a vessel and sent back to his own country. That action was flagrant abuse of the right to a fair trial possessed by every Australian living under the British flag. I notice, also, that Senator Millen chuckled at the reference to the 1915 regulation, passed under the War Precautions Act, because I was in the Ministry then, and, apparently, the fact that the regulation was made at a time when I was in the Government was sufficient justification, in his present frame of mind, for Senator Millen's attitude. But let us examine the position: Suppose that a man were engaged manufacturing rifles in 1915, and were subsequently wounded by some one using one of these rifles, and that when the accused was brought before the Court, his counsel said, "Why, you are charging this man with shooting with a rifle that you yourself made." Would that be sufficient justification for the injury done? It is true the Government of which I was a member passed the War Precautions Act in 1915 by which the safety of this nation could be maintained in time of war, but Senator Millen now gets hold of a regulation made under the Act and degrades his position by using it as a justification for the action of this Government against an innocent citizen.

Senator SENIOR.—Are you sure?

Senator GARDINER.—I never speak unless I am sure of my facts. Senator SENIOR asks—"Are you sure?" I am sure there was no excuse for the action of the Government. Not only am I sure that Paul Freeman has had a criminal



charge laid against him, I am sure, also, that this Government are doing far worse. There is no bigger-hearted senator in this chamber than Senator Senior, yet, despite the degrading acts by this Government, equal in my judgment to the brutality of the Huns, Senator Senior will still support them.

Senator NEWLAND.—But you have been pleading for leniency for the Huns. Have you no mercy for them now?

Senator GARDINER.—But these are the acts of a Government, who are not even sparing innocent boys and girls. Paul Freeman, I say, was deported without a trial.

Senator SENIOR.—Is he a boy or a girl?

Senator GARDINER.—He is a full-grown man. I can quite understand the honorable senator's desire to drag me from my point, but he will not succeed. This Government sent a circular to a number of the wives of interned Germans in this country, and with Hun brutality informed them that they must be deported with their husbands, with or without their little Australian sons or daughters.

Senator SENIOR.—But you would have complained if the Government had not sent their wives with them, and you are weeping because they have done so.

Senator GARDINER.—The honorable senator can interject as much as he likes, but he will not take me off my subject, and as I said before, I am quite sure he will support the Government, no matter how brutal their action may be.

Senator SENIOR.—But I fail to see any brutality in that course of action.

Senator GARDINER.—If it is not an act of brutality, to say to an Australian-born child of tender years, "You must sever yourself from your parents or be an exile from your native country," then I do not understand the meaning of the word.

Senator SENIOR.—They were unfortunate in the choice of their parents, that is all.

Senator GARDINER.—In the circular to which I refer these Australian-born wives of German husbands were given only a brief period of time in which to prepare for deportation.

Senator SENIOR.—How can you speak like that, after reading how Germany treated our own people?

Senator GARDINER.—I can speak thus because personally I decline to be a consenting party to the deportation of any person without a just trial.

Senator NEWLAND.—And so, no matter how great a traitor a man may be, because he is married to an Australian woman he may stay here. Is that your doctrine?

Senator GARDINER.—I am speaking of the position with regard to Australian-born children whose mothers received the circular to which I have referred, giving them the choice of taking their children with them or leaving them in Australia.

Senator NEWLAND.—Do you not approve of that?

Senator GARDINER.—I approve of tempering justice with mercy. The war is over now.

Senator NEWLAND.—And would you keep traitors here?

Senator GARDINER.—If brutality has been committed by the enemy, we need not come down to his level. I can imagine nothing more brutal than the deportation order which would separate Australian-born children from their parents.

Senator SENIOR.—Can't you? Then the Germans would teach you.

Senator GARDINER.—Physical pain, the rack, and the thumb-screw, are not worse. Surely the time has gone by for this form of brutality.

Senator NEWLAND.—We hope not.

Senator GARDINER.—I am sorry to hear Senator Newland defending the Government in an act of this nature. It is rather a disgrace.

Senator NEWLAND.—I think more of Australia than the honorable senator evidently does.

Senator GARDINER.—That is a matter entirely of opinion.

Senator GUTHRIE.—The honorable senator is a good old Hun advocate.

Senator GARDINER.—I realize that, with that animosity which Senator Newland and the Government are prepared to nurse within their breasts, they will not stop at punishing Australian-born boys and girls because their parents happen to be German. I realize that punishment is being meted out to innocents,

not because certain persons committed acts calculated to injure Australia and the Empire, but for the reason that they are German. I have before me a letter written by Mr. James Martin, of Boonah, Queensland. He is a member of one of our labour organizations in that State. His communication states—

To-day, I heard of a German minister's wife (Mrs. Seybald) getting one of these deportation notices. She is a delicate woman, and yet she and her little children are notified to be ready to go in three weeks. Her husband is interned, and has been for some time, for what reason no one knows. He is not even allowed a day off to fix up his affairs. His family are all small children, and one a cripple.

The writer then refers to what he describes as the tyranny of the Government in perpetrating acts of this character. He remarks that he has before him a circular which was sent by the Government to that German wife and mother. I may say that I have not seen that circular, but I have read one which was issued to the wives of internees, and, in my judgment, the issuing of it equals in brutality anything that I know of the Hun himself having committed.

Senator SENIOR.—Germany is a good place to live in, is it not?

Senator GARDINER.—What has that to do with it?

Senator SENIOR.—If it is, why do you complain of Germans being sent back to Germany?

Senator GARDINER.—I am calling attention to a tyrannous act towards women and Australian-born children.

Senator EARLE.—Does the honorable senator believe in the deportation of those interned men at all?

Senator GARDINER.—Not without trial; but, even if those men had done something to deserve deportation, nothing would make me believe that anything so serious could have resulted to Australia and the Empire as to warrant Australian-born children being sent out of this country.

Senator EARLE.—I would take it as an act of kindness that the children should be sent with the father and mother.

Senator GARDINER.—It must not be forgotten that men of the type of these

fathers—and, no doubt, these very men themselves—were originally welcomed to this country. Now, the war being over, and the opportunity for their doing Australia an injury having passed, would it not be merely an Act of humanity, if this dire edict of the Government could be withdrawn?

Senator EARLE.—It all depends upon the offences which those men committed.

Senator MILLEN.—How did these men respond to the hospitality with which Australia welcomed them here?

Senator GARDINER.—Very often we took the course of internng a man because of grave suspicion that if he were permitted to remain at liberty he might do something calculated to endanger our cause.

Senator LYNCH.—You interned men on suspicion, then.

Senator GARDINER.—Yes.

Senator GUTHRIE.—And without trial.

Senator GARDINER.—As a Cabinet Minister in a time of war—and I would do the same again were the position the same—it was my duty to take such steps as were necessary to insure the safety of the country. If our country were threatened by the acts or intentions of an enemy subject, that person should be interned without trial, for the urgent reason that the interests of Australia and the British nation must be protected at all costs. But I would not treat such an interned person as a prisoner. I would simply intern him as a safeguard, and would not dream of treating him as a criminal, and of imposing a sentence upon him. The Fisher and the Hughes Governments, of which I was a member, did not deport one man from the Commonwealth. There is all the difference in the world between the practices of those Administrations and the actions of the present Government. When I stated yesterday that Paul Freeman was entitled to a trial by a jury of men of this country, Senator Russell stated, "He has had it. That jury consisted of the Cabinet." But the accused was not heard before the Cabinet. He did not plead his case before that jury. I have information now that the date on which Freeman was ordered to be



deported was 24th December last. That was a pleasant action on the part of the Government, just on the eve of Christmas—truly a case of “peace on earth, good-will toward men.”

Senator LYNCH.—Would the honorable senator have this country the dumping-ground for the undesirables of other countries?

Senator GARDINER.—The honorable senator knows full well that I would have it as it is—the freest country in the world.

Senator MILLEN.—Yes; and this country would pay for its folly in letting everybody in.

Senator GARDINER.—Even so, it would still be the greatest and freest country in the world. I must voice my deep disappointment at the manner in which my references to the women and children of interned men have been received by honorable senators opposite. When I called attention to what the Government were doing, I fully expected that honorable senators opposite, if they did not exhibit the shamed silence of men degraded by their relationship to such an Administration, would have expressed outspoken indignation. I believe that their sympathy would be aroused.

Senator NEWLAND.—We are rather well pleased with the Government in this matter.

Senator GARDINER.—I am sorry to hear such an interjection. On mature consideration Senator Newland will be sorry for it.

Senator NEWLAND.—I was referring to men deported for disloyalty. I said nothing as to women and children being sent out of the country, and I will not have the honorable senator fasten such an allegation upon me.

Senator GARDINER.—Does Senator Newland agree with the action of the Government in deporting women and children, or does he consider such a thing discreditable?

Senator NEWLAND.—The Government are not deporting women and children.

Senator GARDINER.—A circular letter has been issued informing women that they must be deported with their

husbands, and that their Australian-born children are to be given the option of remaining here or going with them.

Senator MILLEN.—It is a pity the honorable senator has not seen the circular. He has apparently forgotten that if a woman is a British subject she is given the option of remaining here.

Senator NEWLAND.—She and her family may elect to remain in Australia.

Senator O'KEEFE.—And starve?

Senator NEWLAND.—That is twisting it another way. It is all a great plea for the Hun.

Senator GARDINER.—I am interested in what Senator Millen has just remarked. I know full well that if one can only talk to the Minister long enough one will reach the truth.

Senator MILLEN.—That, at any rate, is a comment which has never been said of the honorable senator.

Senator GARDINER.—For the good reason that there has been no need for it. The Minister has stated the case in regard to women of British birth; but how about wives who are of alien birth? What choice have they? They must go. They have the choice of taking their children with them or of leaving them here to the tender mercies of a Government who could perpetrate such tyrannical action as I complain of. One thing certain is that if such acts of tyranny continue I shall make it impossible for me to hold a seat in Parliament. That is what I think of my association with such administrators.

Senator NEWLAND.—You wash your hands of them!

Senator GARDINER.—I emphatically do so. I realize, if the honorable senator does not, that we are passing through very grave times. There has been war. There is plague, and there is famine in Australia to-day. Profiteers have forced prices so high that people in humble occupations are starving. If war and plague and famine do not result in revolution, then history has been read in vain. I hoped that the Government would have been convinced of the serious plight of Australia to-day. I expected that they would have risen to the responsibility of

guiding this country through the awful times ahead of us. What they have done, however, is degrading to public life. They are not fit to be members of the British Empire.

Debate (on motion by Senator BAKHAP) adjourned.

### NEW SENATOR.

Senator EDWARD MULCAHY made and subscribed the oath of allegiance as a senator representing Tasmania.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Debate resumed.

Senator PRATTEN (New South Wales) [4.42].—We are all gratified to know that we meet here at so auspicious a time, when at last that long, dreadful war in which we have been engaged is over. It has clouded Australian as well as all-world questions. Its conclusion is in the direction we all had hoped and prayed for. I think there is every reason throughout this far-flung Empire of ours for the British people to congratulate themselves upon the outcome of four years of struggle. The Leader of the Opposition, in his address on the Government programme for the ensuing session, commenced by giving a little description of what, in his opinion, is an optimist. He described an optimist as a man falling from the roof of a ten-story building, and as he passed every window saying that he was all right so far. May I give another description of an optimist that I once heard? An optimist is a man who thinks things are ripe, as distinguished from a pessimist who thinks things are rotten. I am afraid that any one listening to Senator Gardiner's remarks must conclude that he is a pessimist within my interpretation of the term, because he had not one good word to say about the many things put before us by the Government for consideration during this session.

It is apparent to all thinking people that, although peace may have been signed yesterday, or be signed to-day, or to-morrow, that is not the end of the disruption that has taken place in international and social relationships brought about by the war. I feel that it may take almost as many years

of peace to get back to the conditions of concord and amity previously existing as it has taken years of war to get away from those conditions. I suggest to my honourable friends who think that "no good can come out of Nazareth"—that nothing which the Government propose can be for the good of the people of Australia—that our leaders and statesmen, and particularly those representing us now at the Peace Conference at Versailles, are together with the other leaders and statesmen of the Allied countries building a bridge. A bridge has to be built from the rocks and precipices, the reefs and quicksands of war, to the sunny, grassy slopes of amity and concord. We are all engaged in building the bridge, whether we be in the ranks of the Ministry or be members of the Opposition. I do think that in view of the present great unrest that is going through the world like a prairie fire we have our responsibilities and obligations to help in building this bridge. At least, we should give reasonable assistance in its building, and cheer those engaged in the actual work. There are plenty of people in this world of ours who, if they can, will stop the building of the bridge, and even demolish it altogether. I therefore feel that the programme put before Parliament by the Ministry of the work we are to be called upon to do during the ensuing session sets out something which we can do in the building of the bridge to cross the chasm between war and peace, and it will, I hope, take us a little further on our way than we are now.

Senator Gardiner gave us some figures to show what has been done by Australia to achieve the victory we have won. I do not cavil at his figures. I am with him in saying that Australia has done her full share, and those glorious men of ours have placed Australia's name indelibly on the scroll of history in their achievements from Gallipoli to the Scheldt. I should like to add that, although the war has been won and victory achieved, and a good many people who took no hand in it and did not help in any shape or form will try to take some of the credit the war has been won, not only by those officially in authority, but by the self-sacrifice of patriotic people, who have loved their country sufficiently well to make



that sacrifice. That only has, I think, enabled the British race in Australia and in the Motherland to win the war.

A comparison has been made between the efforts of Australia and those of Canada. I have no complaint to make on that score, but I ask that we should also remember the stupendous efforts made by the people of Scotland. The people of Scotland sent a greater number of men in proportion to population than did the people of any other part of the Empire; and men equal in determination and bravery to any of their brethren of the Empire. Scotland alone has, I believe, sent nearly 15 per cent. of her population to help to win the war. The next nation in point of sacrifice and numbers was gallant little Wales. I do not think that I need remind honorable senators of the stupendous sacrifices that have been made by the people of the Motherland. I do not wish that invidious comparisons should be presented to the people of Australia in connexion with our effort as compared with those of Canada unless they are invited at the same time to remember the stupendous efforts that have been made by the people in the Motherland. For instance, the Motherland emerges from the war with a load of debt per head of population double that which is now loading down the people of Australia. Millions of our fellow countrymen there have been engaged in munition making. Efforts of immense magnitude have been made by the people of England. Comparatively speaking, the cost of living has gone up there more than it has in any other part of the Empire. Then, with regard to numbers, cost, and sacrifice, the people of Australia, badly as many of them have been hit as a result of the war, have not suffered in anything like the way in which the people of the Motherland have suffered.

Senator McDougall.—More luxuries were bought in England last year than in any year before.

Senator Pratten.—We are well aware that millions of munition makers were in a position to obtain luxuries which they could not have dreamt of before the war. That was due to the vast

amount of money circulated in the nature of war expenditure. I am saying that Australia does not stand alone in the matter of sacrifice, and when comparisons are made with other parts of the world it should not be forgotten that Scotland sent most men, and that the debt of England to-day is double that imposed upon the people of Australia, as the result of the war.

During the last fifteen or sixteen months, members of the Government have been representing Australia at that epoch-making Peace Conference that is, I hope, on the eve of completing its labours at Versailles. I think it will be generally agreed by those who have followed the course of international events that none of us anticipated twelve months ago that the conclusions arrived at by the Allies in connexion with Peace settlements, and now accepted by Germany, would be anything like as favorable as they are for the future of the world's peace. Intricate and complicated problems of moment have arisen, and dozens of world-wide questions have had to be settled in all directions. The question of reparation alone would be a stupendous question if no other questions had to be considered. So far as our information enables us to form a judgment, we can congratulate ourselves that, so far as Australia is concerned, we have a fair chance of coming out of the war reasonably well comparing our obligations with those to which other Allied Governments are committed. I need not weary the Senate with details of the problems that have had to be faced. Suffice it to say that these statesmen and leaders of the Empire, and of Australia, have been faced with questions the settlement of which necessitated a compromise. Compromise must necessarily be the basis of all settlement. Although the entry of the United States into the struggle at a late stage in its history gave that great country perhaps a preponderating voice in the final settlement of the Peace terms, I am not going to say that President Wilson's ideals are wrong, or that his forcing of them on the Peace Conference will do other than further assure the future peace of the world. Complaints

have been made, and justifiably made, that America reaped a large profit from the war from its very inception, and that President Wilson has dominated the Peace Conference to a greater extent than was reasonable in view of the small contribution made by America. But the great moral effect of that country's entry into the struggle has made only for the good of humanity, and as citizens of the world we can congratulate ourselves upon the final peace achievement.

Coming more closely to the programme which has been submitted by the Government, I believe that the great consensus of opinion in Australia regarding our representation at the Peace Conference by the Prime Minister is that he completely justified his selection by his action in respect of one matter alone. I allude to his fight in connexion with racial equality. The press has told us the position that he took up in regard to it. Personally, I believe that he expressed the views of 90 per cent. of the electors of Australia, and nothing, therefore, could be more satisfactory to them than the attitude which he adopted. Whether for weal or for woe, we have determined that this continent shall be preserved for the white races, and I believe that the Prime Minister, by adopting the attitude which he did, gained the respect of his opponents by reason of his honest utterances, while he certainly won the support of the electors of Australia, because of the fight which he made for them.

Coming to some of the matters set out in the statement read by Senator Millen, I should first like to say a few words in regard to repatriation. Of course, we hear complaints about the work of the Department. That is inevitable, seeing that amongst every huge aggregation of average citizens, there are bound to be a lot of grouseurs whom nothing will satisfy. In contradistinction to Senator Gardiner, I desire to say that I have had a good deal of experience through ascertaining the feelings which are entertained by returned soldiers. Many of the men are glad to get rid of khaki, and to resume their places in civilian life. They do not want anything from the Government so long as they are treated fairly here. There is also a very large section of returned soldiers who admit in their

"dinkum" Australian way that they are being given a fair deal by the Repatriation Department. My own experience is that not 10 per cent. of our returned soldiers are real grumblers and growlers.

Senator Colonel ROWELL.—Nothing like it.

Senator PRATTEN.—In this connexion, perhaps I may be pardoned for relating a little experience of my own. Some months ago, I went into the question of what the Department was doing in the matter of placing some of our returned soldiers in businesses. It appears that certain regulations have been framed under which it is difficult for a man to be placed in a business unless he has had some experience of it prior to his enlistment. Several men came to me to bespeak my assistance in getting them placed in businesses. Amongst these was one, a returned Anzac, who had been wounded two or three times, a very decent man, who was particularly anxious to get into a business that he had under review. I gave him letters to the Department, which treated him courteously and fairly, but which eventually told him that he could not be placed in the business he desired, because he had had no previous experience of it. At that time I thought the decision of the Department was a very harsh one, but I have since had occasion to change my opinion. After four years of fighting I thought it was particularly hard that this man should be defeated by a departmental regulation, and in a weak moment I advanced him the money to acquire the business that he wanted. With a knowledge of how things are going with him now, I am afraid that I shall lose my money. I have come across very many cases in which the men have had a fair deal from the Department, and I am inclined to the opinion that when we find men grouching and agitating, it is because they want more than a fair deal. I am not going to stand for that, notwithstanding the votes which I may lose by my action. Last year Senator Pearce described me as a "general" supporter of the Government, as opposed to a generous one, and I think it will be admitted that I have, on all occasions,



expressed my opinions of Ministerial measures with the utmost frankness.

Senator O'KEEFE.—Why this mildness to-day?

Senator PRATTEN.—Perhaps the honorable senator will be satisfied if he listens to me a little longer. May I say, on behalf of the business community, that I applaud the action of the Government in jettisoning a good many of the War Precautions regulations, which, during the course of the war, have hampered their operations in development. I have no complaint to make regarding the determination of the Government to submit special legislative proposals in connexion with the wheat administration. I believe that the bad old times, in connexion with the sale, control, and risks associated with wheat, have gone, never to return. Although I consider the conception of a Wheat Pool was a statesman-like one at the beginning of the war, there are many things in connexion with its administration to which exception can be taken. I am informed, on excellent authority, that the clean-up of the four Wheat Pools in New South Wales will result in a very heavy loss. Some of those in a position to know consider that in New South Wales alone, when the whole clean-up is made, the loss occasioned by the mice plague, weevils, and damage by rain, will amount to nearly £2,000,000. I do not think that any honorable senator will stand for a control which has done no better than that. I trust that the Government, in continuing the wheat-pooling arrangements, will give sole control in the matter of the care of the stacks and the marketing of the product to the men who own it—the farmers themselves. I hope that the Government control will not amount to anything more than the Government representation which will be necessary by reason of the financial arrangements between themselves and the farmers. Another Bill which is forecasted is intended to continue some of the governmental regulations, so far as our forthcoming wool clip is concerned. I understand that it will enable control to be continued to 30th June, 1920, and that it will virtually control the market-

ing of the next clip. I have, from time to time, objected to autocratic control in connexion with this matter. Quite a number of complaints have grown up in connexion with subsidiary interests. Whilst I do not think that any complaint can be justified in connexion with the wool-scouring industry, consideration will certainly have to be given to the fellmongering industry, and to the leather and pelt trade. I hope, therefore, that the Bill which I have no doubt has been prepared by the Government contains provisions for controlling what I regard as the autocratic powers of the present Central Wool Committee, so that more general satisfaction may be given to those concerned in this industry. I do not say that Australia has had a good deal. Australia, I think, has sacrificed much, as we now find in connexion with the sale of our primary products. America has fallen all over us in regard to some products, particularly metals, and the Government would be well advised to decline further control of that commodity. The present position is a tragedy. Copper, lead, and our rare base metal industries particularly, are almost in a state of stagnation. We all fear that the world will take some time to re-adjust itself; and our metal producers have a strong claim upon our sympathy, because during the war Australian copper was selling at from £108 to £110 per ton, while American producers, who practically controlled the market, have averaged during the past twelve months nearly £150 per ton. Our rare base metals—molybdenite, wolfram, and tungsten—have brought very much less, controlled, than the world's parity. The Government, therefore, would be well advised, so far as the metal situation is concerned, to allow producers to do exactly what they like, within reasonable limits, to resuscitate this stagnant industry. The prohibition on the export of ores which has been in full force for some time has directly and indirectly been responsible for the shutting down of a good many small mines. This control had been exercised in the so-called interests of the Empire; but, so far as I have been able to ascertain, a clear line of demarcation must be drawn between the political and commercial side of our

dealings with the British Government. I do not believe that in trade matters we should view suggestions from the Imperial Government in the same way as the early Christians regarded the word "Mesopotamia," for I know there has been a good deal of profiteering behind some of these controls. The inter-Allied tin control has resulted in the Malaya tin producers being scaled to the extent of £15 or £20 in regard to the sale of tin oxide, for the benefit, not of the British Government, but of some one else in London. I suggest, therefore, that this very important section of our primary production be not controlled by the Government without a full knowledge as to who is controlling it, what there is in it for the people overseas, and without consideration being given to the question where the metals are going and the price paid to the producer.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens).—Order! There is a continual buzz of conversation in the press gallery, to which I must call attention. The press gallery is provided for members of the press, to enable them to take accurate reports of the debates; not to disturb the proceedings by talking.

Senator PRATTEN.—I repeat that this so-called British Government control of our metals has resulted in our producers getting less than the American producers; and, as I have shown, the tin producers in Malaya have been obliged to accept less than London parity, not to mention the American price. It is a very good thing for Australia that the inter-Allied tin control did not extend its ramifications and operations to this country. If it had, I believe our tin producers would have obtained much less for their tin oxide than they were able to get. In connexion with this metals question, I urge the Government to make the most exhaustive inquiries; to be satisfied with nothing but facts, not camouflage, before they bring down any Bill seeking to continue control of metals, even in a sectional way.

My honorable friend, the Leader of the Opposition (Senator Gardiner) has, I think, referred to the increase in the cost of living in Australia. But Australia is not alone. This increase is world-wide. The cost of living has not increased in

Australia to anything like the same extent as in other countries, and strange as it may appear, the cost in Queensland, which is so ably represented by my honorable friend, Senator Maughan, has gone up to a greater extent than anywhere else in the Commonwealth.

Senator MAUGHAN.—Are you sure of your facts? Have you seen Knibbs' latest figures?

Senator PRATTEN.—This increase in the cost of living is a world-wide movement, and is an extremely complicated subject. The issue of paper money made by this and other Governments, as a war obligation, has had some effect upon prices, and I am quite sure that the very abnormal taxation in England, in relation to excess war-time profits, income, and other matters, has also had a very great effect upon the cost of living. I am not here to say that one Government or one party has been responsible for this state of affairs, or even that there has been so much of that profiteering which my honorable friends are so glad to talk about from time to time.

Senator O'KEEFE.—But you admit that there are profiteers?

Senator PRATTEN.—Yes; but with all due deference to honorable senators opposite, I say that profiteering in Australia compared with the profiteering in other parts of the world is as the scourging with a whip to the scourging with scorpions. Let us see what happens: As honorable senators know, I have had some experience in the jam and fruit preserving trades of Australia. The ordinary 1-lb. tin of jam, which the average housewife buys two or three times per week, to-day is costing 2d. more per tin than before the war. In other words, there has been an increase, approximately, of 50 per cent., and as the average housewife will buy about three tins per week, she will be paying 6d. per week more for this commodity than prior to the war. But how has that increase been brought about? Honorable senators will say—and I think quite rightly—that the fruit-grower does not get any of it.

Senator Colonel ROWELL.—He does not.



Senator PRATTEN.—I admit that. The manufacturer gets 50 per cent. more than under pre-war conditions; but it must be borne in mind that 1d. of that 2d. increase goes to the tin plate manufacturer of South Wales,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to the sugar grower of Queensland, and the other  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. is accounted for by the increased cost of labour and local material. Here, then, is an illustration of what my honorable friends opposite call profiteering—an increase of 50 per cent. on pre-war prices, all accounted for.

Senator FAIRBAIRN.—Even the sugar grower has to pay an extra price for his labour now.

Senator PRATTEN.—That is so. If we analyze these charges of profiteering, it will be found that in many cases the devil is not so bad as he is painted, at least so far as Australia is concerned. I am not prepared to admit that the whole of our manufacturers are profiteers, though I admit that some have been doing well as a result of the war.

Senator O'KEEFE.—You mentioned manufacturers. The importers are worse.

Senator PRATTEN.—Yes; but my honorable friend forgets that very often the whole of the Australian manufacturers are included in this broad sweeping statement of profiteering. Indeed, the Australian manufacturers are sometimes specifically referred to, and in the case quoted, I have accounted for the rise in price of Australian-made goods. In a great many other cases it will be found, also, that the increase in the cost of production is solely and wholly due to the increased cost of raw material. The flour millers are compelled to give a certain price for wheat, and are restricted so far as the sale of their product is concerned. Although millers' balance-sheets may show an additional profit as compared with pre-war conditions, I do not think any reasonable man will object to a firm working, say, three shifts in twenty-four hours, showing a little more profit. The wear and tear upon the machinery would be very much greater, and it would be necessary, for that reason alone, that the profit should be increased. I could follow the question of profiteering in many directions. I could

show that the real reason for the price of most articles of Australian production having risen is the cost of raw material which, more often than not, has been imported from abroad. I cite such domestic articles as buckets and tubs made from imported galvanized iron. We in Australia are not responsible for the price of galvanized iron having been increased, as the result of the war, from £20 to £80 a ton and more. The raw material of those buckets and tubs, manufactured in Australia, was galvanized iron which cost at one time nearly £100 a ton. In such circumstances prices were bound to soar, and none but the most elementary political economist would say that the Australian manufacturer was profiteering.

According to a press report last week, honorable senators opposite are preparing to commit political hari-kari. I am given to understand that in the platform of the Labor party there is a plank to the effect that if the party ever again secures power it will abolish the Senate. Its members realize, I hope, that first they must alter the Constitution, and that that cannot be done in a day or a year or, perhaps, a decade. The stated intention may be, of course, merely a pious aspiration involving no risk to Labour representatives at present in this Chamber; but I desire to discuss the practical question of what we should do while the Senate is still in existence. I believe in proportional representation. In a Chamber constituted as this is—essentially a States Chamber—there should be representation of minorities as well as of majorities. It does not require much imagination to see how, in certain circumstances, there may be 36 members of the Senate belonging to one party and no representation of any other. In view of improvements recently effected with regard to the election of representatives in another place the Government will be well advised if, instead of tinkering with a sort of preferential vote which will confer no advantages over present methods, they adopt the proportional representation system. That would insure to the votes of the electors their proper reflection in the Senate. Despite the insinuations of the Leader of the Opposition in this Chamber, I do not know the

intentions of the Government, but among the electors there is a growing appreciation of the benefits of such a system of voting. Illustrations of its operation in Tasmania have emphasized that proportional representation would send to this Chamber representatives who fairly, and, therefore proportionately, represented the electors. I trust that the Government will not experiment with systems which may look good enough and may suit them, but that they will say emphatically, "We shall have proportional representation." The party to which I belonged prior to the war committed itself to the system; and, after full discussion, I feel assured that a majority of honorable senators will favour the mathematical form of representation.

I hail with satisfaction the decision of the Government to revise the Tariff at an early date. We are faced in Australia with the obligation of paying off a huge war debt amounting to £300,000,000. If we include our notes fund and other obligations our total debt becomes £350,000,000. The veriest tyro in politics must see that our only hope of bearing this load lightly is by increasing production and by exercising a determined care for the balance of trade in our favour—without which we shall very soon get into a financial bog. Since the war even such eminent Free Traders as Mr. Asquith, formerly Prime Minister of England, have become converted to the doctrine of the balance of trade. Before the war the economists of the old school—the middle Victorian era—set up the theory that the more we imported the richer we grew. I was glad to learn, over two years ago, that a Free Trader ranking as does Mr. Asquith, should have admitted his conversion, and should have said that as a result of her war obligations England must see to it that the balance of trade as between imports and exports should never be against her. In other words, the late Prime Minister's view was that the greatest concentration possible should be made upon the development of exports, and that in every way possible imports should be discouraged. In Australia we have a certainty of immense primary production. Our imports have lately grown considerably. At the present rate of expansion they will soon exceed exports. I am deeply satisfied,

therefore, with the announcement of the Government respecting the Tariff. I trust that its consideration will not be left too late in the session. One of the many angles of discussion upon that subject will probably be in relation to the increased cost of living in certain directions as the result of alterations of the Tariff. I do not intend to stand for the imposition of duties which will surely increase the cost of necessary commodities. If Australian manufacturers are given a fair chance; especially against the possible surplus dumping of our Allies—and two of them, particularly—internal competition will bring down prices; and, although imports may perhaps be restricted, our internal development—if the Tariff is scientifically revised—will assuredly not increase the cost of living.

I hope the Government will go slow in regard to Naval policy. The details and ramifications of the Peace terms are not yet understood, nor, indeed, known in Australia. I hope the peoples of to-day will witness a general disarmament, and I firmly trust that Great Britain will be given the policing of the seas for the League of Nations. In that case it will not be necessary for Australia to burden herself with very large additions to her Naval Unit. I do not believe that the Government, in considering Australia's future Naval policy, will ask Parliament to commit itself to anything in the way of development until we can fully appreciate what will follow the establishment of the League of Nations and the task of Britain as the policeman of the seas.

I am sorry that such apparently heavy sentences were imposed in Sydney some days ago in connexion with the so-called mutiny on board the *Australia*. Although we call our navy "the Australian Navy" it is really under British control; and, until the war is over and our naval policy is approved by Parliament, it must remain under British control. I hope that our future naval policy will provide for a Royal Australian Navy in fact as well as in name. At present all the officers on our warships are loaned by the Royal Navy. There is considerable dissatisfaction amongst the rank and file of our Navy, because of the narrowing of their chances of promotion due to this



reason. Only last week two fights occurred in George-street, Sydney, between Australian and British jack tars of the same ratings and off the same ship. There was no personal animus between the contestants at all; but their quarrel started in connexion with this system of promotion. Officers, even down to warrant and petty officers, are chosen from the British Navy, and our own men are debarred from chances of promotion.

Senator BAKHAP.—Why?

Senator PRATTEN.—Owing to the system; and I am now suggesting to the Government that that system must be very carefully reviewed.

Senator MILLEN.—When the honorable senator speaks of the system, is not length of service a dominating factor?

Senator PRATTEN.—That may be under British Navy regulations; but I say again that if we are to have an Australian Navy we must see that as soon as we can we make it an Australian Navy in fact as well as in name. Although the system debarring from possible promotion the rank and file of our men who have joined our Navy has been in force during four years of war under British Navy conditions, I say it is an obligation upon the representatives of Australia, and of Australia herself, to see that those conditions do not always obtain.

I do not intend to weary the Senate by referring to many other matters included in the very big programme of suggested legislation which the Government has placed before us, but I must say, as a representative of New South Wales, that I regret that there is not a single word in the Ministerial statement that applies to the Federal Capital. The construction of the Federal Capital is the only obligation of our Constitution that has not been kept. Our obligations to Tasmania and to Western Australia in financial matters have been fulfilled. The Commonwealth has built the Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta railway to link up Western Australia with the eastern States. In other directions the Commonwealth has stood to the bargain made in 1901, when Federation was accomplished. I shall not labour the matter of the Federal Capital now, but I

think I ought to mention it. If the Government are in earnest in connexion with that matter, I have no doubt that ways and means might be found to continue the work. If it were possible for this Parliament to meet at Canberra, in Federal Territory, away from the loaves and fishes of the cities, and away also from the pull-devil-pull-baker system that operates here in connexion with some Federal administration, we should be able to take a more dispassionate and more equitable view of the big problems with which we are faced. I hope that the Government will take into consideration the question of proceeding with the Federal Capital. The Treasurer (Mr. Watt) informs us that we shall have a reasonably good surplus, and, while I have no wish to ear-mark that, nor any indemnity we may get from Germany, I say that in connexion with repatriation alone there are ways and means of going on with work at the Federal Capital, thereby keeping the sacred and honorable compact made with New South Wales when Federation was achieved.

Senator O'KEEFE (Tasmania) [5.45].

—In the document placed before us by the Government there is certainly plenty of food for discussion. I object straightway to one of the first paragraphs in it, in which it is stated that—

Until the protracted deliberations of the Peace Conference were approaching finality, it was considered inadvisable to summon the Houses for the discussion of public business. Even now, the information at the disposal of the Government as to the terms of Peace is not sufficient to warrant the submission of the matter to Parliament, and it appears probable that it will have to await the return of the Australian representatives.

I join issue with the Government when they contend that it was necessary to keep the doors of this Parliament closed, and to govern the country under the War Precautions Act, simply because Peace had not been signed. During this time, Parliaments have met in Great Britain and in France. If it was wise that Parliaments should meet in Great Britain and in France—within a stone's throw of the actual scene of the war and the centre of the deliberations of those charged with the settlement of great problems—to deal

with legislative matters other than those involved in the terms of Peace, it does seem to me that in Australia, so far removed from the scene of conflict, there was justification, and, indeed, necessity, for Parliament to meet earlier than it has met to deal with the vast problems awaiting our solution.

There are a number of matters referred to in the Ministerial statement which are bound to be fully discussed, and which will take a long time to deal with in both Houses. The importance of many of them warrants the fullest discussion, and if this Parliament is to give legislative effect to the matters included in the Ministerial statement, it will not be possible for us to rise before this day twelve months. We know that we must rise early in the new year, and it may be found inconvenient for this Parliament to sit at all in the new year. The people of Australia have been wondering why the doors of the Federal Parliament should have been kept closed for six or seven months in view of the important problems awaiting consideration. Some of them are mentioned in the Ministerial statement, and many of them might have been dealt with without the slightest reference to the Conference being held on the other side of the world. A number of matters referred to in the statement before us could have been brought forward several months ago, as they are not affected by the signing of the Peace terms.

Two or three paragraphs are devoted to the question of repatriation, and we are told that—

The powers of Local Repatriation Committees have recently been greatly extended, and it is anticipated that this decentralization will insure the treatment of applications with a minimum of delay.

I am not going to quarrel with Senator Pratten's statement that the Repatriation Department has done good work. With the control of so much expenditure it would not have been possible for such a Department to avoid doing some good work. The Minister in charge of the Department would not be the type of man we know Senator Millen to be if he were not able to say that he had done

some good work, and some that had given general satisfaction. At the same time, I disagree with the system of control of the Repatriation Department. When Senator Millen claims, as no doubt he will, that the system adopted is the best, and when Senator Pratten, who apparently believes that it is the best system, since he does not object to it, makes the same claim, I can inform both that meetings of returned soldiers' associations in different parts of Australia have objected to the present system of control. They have advocated that, instead of the great problems of repatriation being allowed to depend for solution upon honorary efforts, the whole business should be vested in three well-paid Commissioners, to be chosen because of their known organizing ability, even though we should have to search the world for them. They should be paid according to the value of the work they have to do and the magnitude of the problems with which they will have to deal. There are, in proportion to population, as many returned soldiers in Hobart as in any other city in the Commonwealth, and at a meeting of the association held recently there, the secretary, who was a member of the State Parliament, and is a trusted officer, with other leading members of the association, spoke in very adverse terms of the work of the Repatriation Department. They were not blaming the Minister for what they regarded as faults, nor were they blaming any of the local committees. They were blaming the system of control. I felt very interested in this matter, because they carried resolutions which were exactly to the same effect, and almost in the same words, as proposals which I endeavoured to get embodied in the Repatriation Bill when it was before this Chamber. I am not going to deny that good work has been done by the local Repatriation Committees. I am as grateful as anybody to them for the work which they have performed in a honorary capacity, but I claim that the job is too big for them. The problems involved are too vast to be allowed to rest on honorary effort. Millions of pounds have to be expended in properly restoring to their civil avocations the men, who, if their interests



are not looked after, will suffer because they were game enough to leave Australia to fight for a good cause. I repeat that the job is too big to be allowed to rest on honorary effort. I believe that if we could get into touch with the Repatriation Committees in the bigger centres of Australia we should find that many of them entertain the same opinion. I am fortified in this conviction by the resolutions which were passed by the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Association in Hobart. That a great deal has been done for our returned soldiers we all know, but I am sorry to say that, in some instances, they are not being as well treated by private employers as we were led to believe they would be. I recognise that many private employers have been true to their pledges. I admit that many institutions have kept their promises to these men. But there are individuals and institutions which have seized upon any trivial excuse, so long as it meant the saving of a few shillings, for refusing to reinstate these men in their former positions. Then again there are cases in which employers, in a mistaken zeal to keep their pledges, have gone too far in the other direction. I know of cases in which the very best tradesmen in their own callings—men with families dependent upon them—have been regretfully dismissed in order to make room for returned soldiers. I know of a linotype operator, with a family dependent upon him, who is acknowledged by his employers to be one of the best of workmen, and who was dismissed to make room for a returned soldier who was a single man. I do not believe that the “dinkum” returned men stand for that kind of thing. But these incidents serve to show the difficulty that will be experienced in finding employment for returned soldiers without doing very grave injustice to others. That is all the more reason why this difficulty should be dealt with by men who are qualified to undertake the work, and who will be well paid for doing it. They should be men of great organizing ability. I hope that, ere long, we shall see a change in the system of control, and that we shall have paid commissioners who will be responsible to the Minister for Repatriation,

*Senator O'Keefe.*

who, in his turn, will be responsible to Parliament.

Paragraph 4 of the Ministerial program contains a reference to the outbreak of influenza which has played such havoc in various parts of Australia. It says—

The influenza epidemic in our midst has caused regrettable loss of life and widespread distress.

Although quarantine is in the hands of the Commonwealth, important health powers still reside with the States.

When an outbreak of this disease appeared probable, the Government, with a keen desire to unite all the administrative forces of Australia in its attack, entered into an agreement with the States, which provided for complete concert and co-operation.

This agreement was abrogated by several State Governments, who, in defiance of constitutional rights, imposed their own quarantine measures on land and sea traffic.

The result was a lamentable disorganization of the shipping services, occasioning serious shortages of food supplies and fuel in many parts of the Commonwealth, and grave delays in the debarkation of our returning soldiers.

The futility of such methods was, however, gradually recognised by most of the States, and nearly all the local regulations have since been withdrawn.

I wish to point out that there is one State which has not withdrawn the regulations imposed by its own health authorities. That State, in defiance of the Federal quarantine authorities, and backed up by the opinion of its own health authorities, has insisted upon retaining a seven days' quarantine as the only safe precaution against the introduction of influenza. So far it has been fortunate enough to escape any outbreak of the disease. Whilst it is true that influenza cases have been brought to Tasmania by the *Wyandra* and other vessels, those cases have been disembarked at the Quarantine Station in Barnes Bay, on the Derwent, some miles distant from Hobart. There they have been compelled to undergo a period of seven days' detention, as recommended by the health officers of Tasmania. The Chief Health Officer of that State, who is also the officer in charge of the quarantine arrangements for the Commonwealth, has expressly stated—and his opinion is upheld by every medical man in Tasmania—that seven days may be regarded as a safe period of quarantine, but nothing less than seven days. The paragraph

which I have quoted does not say that when our health officers refused to shorten this term of quarantine, the Acting Prime Minister, advised, I suppose, by Dr. Cumpston, the Chief Commonwealth Health Officer, sent a brutal ultimatum to Tasmania, stating that if the period of quarantine were not shortened to four days, such little shipping as Tasmania had at that time would be withdrawn. When the Acting Prime Minister took advantage of a chance Act of Parliament to send such an ultimatum to a State whose only desire was to keep the scourge of influenza outside its territory, he sadly misunderstood his functions. What benefit would it be to anybody if, by reason of shortening the period of quarantine, a State which had hitherto been clean, became infected? The only reason advanced by the Acting Prime Minister for his action was the lamentable disorganization of the shipping service. He may have had some reason to point out to the State Government that as far as possible they should co-operate with the Commonwealth Government, but when he sent his message threatening to withdraw what shipping Tasmania possessed at a time when hundreds of our producers were faced with ruin on account of the almost total absence of shipping facilities with which to transport their perishable products to the mainland—

Senator RUSSELL.—Tasmania declined to allow us to land troops from vessels which had been declared clean.

Senator O'KEEFE.—The Acting Minister for Defence is making a statement which I have never seen in print. I do not know the particular incidents that he has in his mind, but I do know that at the time of which I speak Tasmania was suffering from a tremendous scarcity of shipping. Yet because its health officer said that seven days' quarantine provided a safe margin in the case of influenza, while four days did not, the authorities there were told that if they insisted upon keeping ships in quarantine for seven days the little shipping which Tasmania already had would be withdrawn. Seeing that the threat could be made only by reason of the powers conferred under the War Precautions Act, the Acting Prime Minister was taking an unfair advantage of the powers vested in the Government.

But for the War Precautions Regulations, Ministers could exercise no control whatever over shipping. Consequently the Acting Prime Minister seized upon a piece of emergency legislation to seriously interfere with the livelihood of a very large number of people. Hundreds of Tasmanian producers were faced with absolute ruin if they did not accept the verdict of the Commonwealth Government, and on the other hand, if they did not indorse the view of the State Government the whole of Tasmania was in danger of becoming infected. The fact that Tasmania has escaped the influenza epidemic is the best possible evidence we could have that our own health officers were right, and Dr. Cumpston was wrong about the quarantine period.

Senator BAKHAP.—Hear, hear!

Senator RUSSELL.—We all join in congratulating Tasmania upon her immunity.

Senator O'KEEFE.—I am glad to have the Minister's assurance, but if he had attended some of the public meetings held in the chief centres of Tasmania, he would have realized that there was an impression that the Acting Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Government do not care two straws what happened to Tasmania so long as shipping facilities were not hindered by the longer period of quarantine. Senator Bakhap will bear me out in that statement.

Senator BAKHAP.—I do not think that the honorable senator is quite correct in saying that the people of Tasmania had the impression that the Acting Prime Minister did not care two straws what happened to Tasmania. Their impression was that the State Government were right in their attitude. That is beyond question.

Senator O'KEEFE.—It is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. This is no party matter. I have gathered in conversation with groups of people everywhere that the general impression was that the Government did not care so long as shipping was released.

Senator BAKHAP.—We are supporting our own Government to a man. That is the point.



Senator O'KEEFE.—That is so. No party interests are involved in this matter. There were big meetings in Hobart, Launceston, and elsewhere, attended by both opponents and supporters of the present Government, and there was a general chorus of condemnation against the action of the Acting Prime Minister and the Government. The Controller of Shipping (Admiral Clarkson) seems to have Tasmania in his grip, and does just what he likes in connexion with quarantine matters. In an interview I had with him the other day, he informed me that he did not believe that there was any more influenza in Victoria than in Tasmania, but I told him that, in such matters, I preferred to accept the views of our own health officers.

Senator BAKHAP.—Fortunately, we are not losing our population, at all events.

Senator O'KEEFE.—Admiral Clarkson seemed to have the idea that the medical officers of Tasmania did not have a proper grip of the position, because they had not been over to Victoria. That was a most remarkable statement to come from a man in Admiral Clarkson's position. I submit that the Government have treated Tasmania very unfairly in connexion with the shipping during the past six months. We are only a small State, numerically and geographically, and probably that is the reason why we have not received more consideration.

Senator BAKHAP.—We ought to receive first consideration as regards shipping, because that is our only means of communication with the mainland.

Senator O'KEEFE.—Undoubtedly we should. There is no comparison between the difficulties encountered in Tasmania by shipping quarantine, and difficulties in the other States, because Tasmania is completely isolated. The other States may have their troubles, but at least they have some means of communication between the capital cities, so they are not in the same position as Tasmania, which has been absolutely cut off from the mainland for two or three weeks at a time. With shipping withdrawn, it has been impossible for our people to get supplies which are absolutely necessary, and impossible, also, to transport to the mainland their perishable products, which

have been piled up for months past on all the wharfs. Pears must be marketed within a few days after being picked, but owing to the withdrawal of shipping, thousands of cases have been allowed to rot on the trees, to the ruin of orchardists, who are a very fine type of citizen, engaged in the very best type of closer settlement in Australia.

Senator BAKHAP.—And representing one of the principal industries of Tasmania.

Senator O'KEEFE.—Apple-growers have suffered in like manner, because in ordinary seasons they look to the Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne markets to absorb a certain proportion of their crop; and as no oversea ships have been available of late, they were relying upon the Inter-State markets to take a larger proportion this year than usual.

I come now to another aspect of the shipping position. Paragraph No. 6 of the Ministerial statement reads—

A large number of the fleet of steamers which are owned in Australia is still under Imperial requisition, but their release is expected within a few months. The vessels remaining in Australian waters are requisitioned under powers conferred under the War Precautions Act. As a result of the governmental control of Inter-State shipping, Australia has, during the war, enjoyed more favorable freights and fares than any other belligerent country. The urgent question of maintaining, after the present control expires, the cheap coastal services in the face of the tempting rates earned by tonnage in other waters, is at present engaging the attention of the Government.

Senator RUSSELL.—If we released those boats they could earn enormous profits overseas.

Senator O'KEEFE.—What does the paragraph mean?

Senator RUSSELL.—It is an intimation that we do not intend to let them go.

Senator O'KEEFE.—I am glad to get that assurance from the Minister, because of the inference that probably the Government might allow these vessels to earn a lot of money in other parts of the world, instead of bringing them to Australia and working them in Australian waters. Some people might say that that is good business; that as these ships are owned by the people of the Commonwealth, they should be run as a commercial proposition. I am very glad,

indeed, to know that the Government have no intention of continuing to employ these vessels in other waters merely because they would earn more money there. This will be very good news, indeed; to the people of Tasmania. Recently, one of the biggest deputations of business men ever held in Hobart approached the Premier and asked him to communicate with the Federal authorities to see if the shipping situation could not be eased by having one of the federally-owned vessels put on the run between the mainland and Hobart; and another between the mainland and the north coast. I tell the Government candidly that, unless something is done to ease the position pretty soon, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of our very best producers will be absolutely ruined. The wharfs along the northern coast—at Stanley, Burnie, Devonport, and Ulverstone—have been stacked up with produce for months past, awaiting shipment to the mainland. The position is perhaps intensified down south, because the northern produce is not so perishable. There was an impression that when the Government spent over £2,000,000 in purchasing a fleet of ships, they did it, not with the intention of running those vessels all around the world merely as a trading proposition, but with the sole purpose of easing the situation in Australia. I trust that as the steamers return to Australian waters the Government will free them, so far as possible, from overseas engagements, and that as many of them as may be required for the shipping services of the Commonwealth will be retained. Unless that autocrat of shipping, Rear-Admiral Sir William Clarkson, can see his way clear to take action at once the position will become still more serious.

Senator BAKHAP.—What was the matter with the steamer which came across empty to-day? Could she not have brought Tasmanian produce to the mainland? On account of the seamen's strike, she would not have made the passage if she had been asked to carry cargo. The *Wyandra* could have crossed with a full load of Tasmanian produce for the mainland markets but for the strike.

Senator O'KEEFE.—Is the honorable senator suggesting that that is due to the seamen's strike?

Senator BAKHAP.—A very large share of the responsibility must rest upon those responsible for the seamen's strike.

Senator O'KEEFE.—It is a question which must be discussed at length, and I ask leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Senate adjourned at 6.29 p.m.

## House of Representatives.

Thursday, 26 June, 1919.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### REQUISITION OF VESSELS.

Mr. KELLY.—I desire to ask the Minister representing the Minister for the Navy if he can arrange to have laid upon the table of the Library all the papers in the possession of the Navy Office in connexion with the requisition for trading purposes of the two vessels originally known as *Emerald Wings* and *Bright Wings*, and as to the arrangements for their subsequent trading operations in the Commonwealth?

Mr. WISE.—I shall submit the honorable member's request to the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton).

### COST OF LIVING.

#### INTER-STATE COMMISSION'S REPORTS.

Mr. TUDOR.—Will the Minister for Trade and Customs state whether the reports of the Inter-State Commission dealing with the cost of living—I refer particularly to the reports on house rents and clothing—will be made available at once to honorable members? I have seen a copy privately, but wish to know when these reports will be available to honorable members generally?

Mr. GREENE.—I will see that they are made available as early as possible.



## PROFITEERING AND BOLSHEVISM.

Mr. FENTON.—At an important gathering in England recently the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), according to the press reports, declared that profiteering bred Bolshevism. I wish to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he is in accord with that opinion, and if so, whether he will do something to suppress profiteering?

Mr. WATT.—I regret that I am not at liberty to answer the honorable member's question, since a question of the same kind stands on the notice-paper in the name of the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs).

## EMPLOYMENT AT SOUTH MAITLAND.

Mr. CHARLTON.—On our last day of sitting last year the Acting Prime Minister promised to make inquiries as to an advertisement in the press inviting persons to apply for employment on the South Maitland coalfields. Has the honorable gentleman completed that inquiry?

Mr. WATT.—I do not know how long it is since the inquiry was completed. All the details are in the Department, and I will look them up for the honorable member.

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Will the Acting Prime Minister state whether any negotiations are proceeding between the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments relative to the selection of a successor to Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson as Governor-General of the Commonwealth. If so, will he suggest that a commoner, who is neither a military nor a naval officer, would be most acceptable to the people of Australia?

Mr. WATT.—It is rather unusual to bring a matter of this kind before the House without notice. I am not aware that any such negotiations are proceeding between the Imperial and Commonwealth Governments.

## SUPPLY OF POTASH.

Mr. MACKAY.—I desire to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs whether he will state for public information what steps have been taken by the Government to obtain overseas a supply of potash for the use of the fruit-growers of Australia?

Mr. GREENE.—It would be well, I think, for the honorable member to give notice of this question, so that I may be in a position to give the House full and detailed information. For some considerable time we have been negotiating for supplies of potash, and I should like to give the House full particulars.

## NAVY AND DEFENCE ADMINISTRATION.

### FINAL REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. HIGGS.—Has the Acting Prime Minister received the final report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into Navy and Defence administration? If so, will he lay it on the table of the House, and move that it be printed. I think there was a final report drawn up.

Mr. WATT.—I think that a very small report was rendered before the Commission dispersed. I do not know whether it has been laid on the table, but I shall look into the matter.

## WOOL APPRAISEMENT PORTS.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Will the Acting Prime Minister make available all papers, letters, telegrams, &c., in relation to the naming of certain seaports as places for the appraisement of wool?

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member refers to all correspondence, &c.?

Mr. BAMFORD.—Yes.

Mr. WATT.—I see no objection to that.

## DEPORTATION OF ALIENS.

### SEPARATION OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

Mr. BRENNAN.—I wish to ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he does not consider that it is rather out of harmony with the published policy of his party in regard to the purity of the

home and the sanctity of the marriage tie to forcibly separate Australian-born women from their husbands of German blood, as is being done by the Government in connexion with the deportation of alleged aliens?

Mr. WATT.—I am not aware that that is being done. If the honorable member will give notice of his question, I shall ascertain the required particulars.

### TRADE RECIPROCITY WITH CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Will the Acting Prime Minister state whether the negotiations which were interrupted by the war have been resumed, with a view to trade reciprocity between the Commonwealth and the Dominions of Canada and New Zealand?

Mr. WATT.—The matter is at present receiving the consideration of the Minister for Trade and Customs in connexion with the preparation of his Tariff, and will, in the course of a week or two, come before the Cabinet for ratification.

### MAIL CONTRACTORS' LOSSES.

Mr. LYNCH.—I wish to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that, owing to the disastrous drought that has afflicted a great part of Australia, many of our country mail contractors are practically ruined, because of the enormous increase in the cost of fodder, and whether he will take into favorable consideration the granting of some relief to them?

Mr. WEBSTER.—The matter is under review. A compilation is being made of the actual alleged losses, and when it is complete I shall endeavour to submit it to those who have the authority to decide the matter.

### SUPPLY OF CORNSACKS AND WOOLPACKS.

Mr. PALMER.—Will the Minister for Trade and Customs state whether any action is being taken by the Government to secure an assured supply of cornsacks and woolpacks for the coming wheat crop and wool clip?

Mr. GREENE.—No action has been taken by the Government this season in regard to either cornsacks or woolpacks.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—If the Government do not intend to operate in cornsacks this year will the Minister for Trade and Customs make a definite announcement at the earliest possible date, so that other importers may have an opportunity to operate on a favorable market?

Mr. GREENE.—Some time ago the Government announced that they proposed to sell whatever bags they had on hand, and to allow trade to flow back into the ordinary channels, and the regular private agencies to be used for the supply of cornsacks in Australia.

### EMIGRATION FROM GREAT BRITAIN TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. PIGOTT.—I desire to ask the Acting Prime Minister if it is a fact that the Imperial authorities are prohibiting emigration to the British Dominions and Colonies? I have before me a letter, in which it is stated that intending immigrants to Australia were prevented from booking passages, although they were anxious to rejoin their friends here.

Mr. WATT.—I am not aware that the Imperial Government is taking any such action. All that I know is that the published accounts of the policy of the British authorities show that they desire henceforth to encourage immigration under the flag—particularly to the British Dominions. There are, however, a number of difficulties in connexion with shipping, for which we are largely responsible, because we are insisting that, wherever possible, the shipping available shall be used primarily for the return of our troops to Australia.

### SAILORS AND INVALID PENSIONS.

Mr. WALLACE.—Will the Treasurer consider an amendment of the Old-age and Invalid Pensions Act in order to provide that seamen domiciled in Australia and permanently incapacitated whilst voyaging in ships trading outside Australia, should participate in the invalidity benefits of the Act?



Mr. WATT.—I shall be glad if the honorable member will supply me with the question, so that I may inquire into its incidence. The proposal has not been put to me previously.

#### PRICE OF FODDER.

Mr. FENTON.—Has the Minister for Trade and Customs noticed the abnormal increase in the charges for fodder within the last few days? Will he inform the House whether the Government has relinquished control over the price of those commodities?

Mr. GREENE.—We are not exercising control over the prices of any articles other than those which are either the subject of a contract with the British Government or in regard to which we have certain financial obligations. We are allowing the States to take up their own constitutional obligations in that regard.

#### QUARANTINE REGULATIONS.

Mr. CORSER.—When does the Minister for Trade and Customs intend to remove the objectionable quarantine regulations now applied to passengers travelling from Queensland to New South Wales, but which are not applicable to passengers on the upward journey?

Mr. GREENE.—The regulations to which the honorable member refers were made after the outbreak of influenza in Queensland, and were to operate until we had some evidence of the form which the epidemic would take in that State. As it appears that the epidemic in Queensland is similar to that in other States, instructions have already been issued to remove the regulations, and I anticipate that that will be done in the course of a few days.

#### MEAT INSPECTORS.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Has the Minister for Trade and Customs given consideration to a recommendation made by Mr. Justice Powers recently on the hearing of certain claims by the meat inspectors in the Trade and Customs Department, namely, that they should be made permanent appointees. His Honour said—

I cannot make any order that the inspectors should be appointed by the Government

permanently, but after hearing the evidence given in the case, I suggest that the Government should in the public interests, and in the interests of the meat inspectors, reconsider the question whether the meat inspectors who are generally employed permanently, namely 80 per cent., should not be appointed as permanent officers, subject to the Commonwealth Government continuing the work of meat inspection for export, and subject to good behaviour and continued efficiency.

Mr. GREENE.—The matter is under consideration at the present time.

#### RECEPTION TO ADMIRAL VISCOUNT JELlicoe.

##### PAYMENT OF OFFICERS.

Dr. MALONEY.—I desire to ask you, Mr. Speaker, a question regarding the payment of officers who were on duty at the reception to Admiral Viscount Jellicoe in this building. Certain officers were brought back to the building for duty, but the list of those officers which has been prepared is not complete. Can you, sir, inform the House of the name of the officer who prepared the list, and why he has rendered it in an incomplete form, with the result that many officers who were on duty did not receive extra payment, or even tea money.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. W. Elliot Johnson).—I have not heard of this complaint before, but I shall make inquiries regarding it from officers of the House. Tea money or any other expense that was incurred in connexion with that reception will be defrayed by one of the Government Departments. The function was not a Parliamentary one; it was arranged by the Government, and therefore was not under the control of the President or myself. I shall endeavour to let the honorable member have an answer to his question later in the day.

#### LETTERGRAMS IN TASMANIA.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Will the Postmaster-General say whether it is correct that he has refused to allow the people of Tasmania, who are isolated from the mainland so far as mails are concerned, the privilege of using lettergrams? If so, upon what grounds is the refusal based?

Mr. WEBSTER.—There is no special restriction upon the people of Tasmania in regard to lettergrams. The law does not allow of differentiation between one State and another.

## MINISTER FOR THE NAVY.

### ABSENCE IN ENGLAND.

Mr. HIGGS.—I ask the Acting Prime Minister why the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) did not come to Australia with Admiral Viscount Jellicoe, who is conducting an inquiry into Naval Bases? Do the Government think that the reported appointment of Sir Joseph Cook as chairman of the Czecho-Slovak Committee at the Peace Conference was a sufficient reason for his remaining in Europe?

Mr. WATT.—From the information at the disposal of the Government I think the reason why the Minister for the Navy was unable to come to Australia with Viscount Jellicoe was that he had even more important duties to perform as one of Australia's delegates at the Peace Conference. Viscount Jellicoe, with whom I discussed the matter, understood the position perfectly.

## WAGGA TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

Mr. FALKINER.—Is the Postmaster-General aware of the great congestion in the telegraph office at Wagga? In view of the importance of that office as a distributing centre, will the Minister endeavour to relieve the congestion which results in delays of from one to three hours in the delivery of telegrams? The congestion was in evidence before the influenza epidemic.

Mr. WEBSTER.—I am advised that there are absent from duty, owing to the influenza epidemic, over 300 men in the engineering branch, 250 in the telephonic branch, 250 in the mail branch, between 50 and 60 in the telegraphic branch; or a grand total, including sectional branches, of 1,100 officers. I have appealed to the public to assist the Department by withholding all but imperative business as the staff is working more overtime than I

desire them to do. I am not inclined to force further overtime upon the men, who are already bearing the brunt of the extra work. The prevalence of the influenza epidemic has affected the activities of the Postal Department for nearly six months. I think the honorable member will find that it is the cause of the trouble about which he is now complaining. The delay to press telegrams is the main cause of complaint. The business of the Department has largely increased because of the necessity to make use of telegraph and telephone facilities. Furthermore, messages relating to the peace celebrations have almost doubled the work of the Telegraph Branch from a press standpoint. In the circumstances I think the Department is doing well to give the service which it is rendering to-day.

## SIGNING OF PEACE.

Mr. HIGGS.—Has the Acting Prime Minister any reason to doubt the truthfulness of the statement he made the other day that the peace terms had been signed by the Germans? Can he say whether there is any truth in the rumour abroad that the peace terms have not been signed, and if he has any doubts upon the matter, will he make inquiries?

Mr. WATT.—I did not make the statement that peace had been signed. I simply told the press of the interception of a radio message from Mauritius to Perth, and immediately it was received gave the contents of the message to the newspapers for the information of the public. From information that has reached me I have no reason to doubt that the Germans will sign the peace terms. I think they have no option in the matter.

## COST OF REPATRIATION.

### LAND SETTLEMENT: TAXATION ON BONDS.

Mr. FALKINER.—In view of the statement by the Treasurer that it will cost £30,000,000 to £40,000,000 to repatriate our soldiers, and the fact that the States are paying for the land they repurchase with scrip free from Federal



and State taxation, does the Treasurer deem it right that this exemption should remain, while people who subscribe to war loans are called upon to pay income tax?

Mr. WATT.—I did not say that our obligations in respect of repatriation would amount to between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000. What I intended to convey was that the commitments of the Commonwealth to the States for land settlement would be between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000.

Mr. FALKNER.—The amount is immaterial to the point I wish to make.

Mr. WATT.—A vast amount of other money will be required for sustenance allowance, vocational training, and housing, which matters are as intimately associated with repatriation as is land settlement. As to the question whether the States in the re-acquisition of land for soldier settlement are doing the right thing in paying with tax-free bonds, a mere expression of an opinion from me would be valueless, because the law at present is clear on the point. I am advised that we are not entitled to tax those bonds. That such is the case is certainly unfortunate, but it is merely another illustration of the impossible condition of government into which Australia is drifting.

## MUNITIONS OF WAR.

### CONTROL OF METALS.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—In view of the statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in England, that the first intimation we shall have of a new war will be the roar of cannon, I would like to know what action the present Administration have taken in order to secure that the people of Australia will have control of the baser metals of Australia, such as lead, zinc, and copper, utilized in the production of munitions of war?

Mr. WATT.—I did not see the report of the utterance of the Prime Minister to which the honorable member refers, but I assume that he is quoting it correctly. The action taken by the Prime Minister before he left for Great Britain, and the policy he initiated, and which has been followed by the present Govern-

ment, in regard to those metals which are the basic element in the production of munitions of war have placed absolute power in the hands of the Australian people and the Australian Commonwealth Government to control those metals. All enemy influence has been finally excluded, and commandeering could be carried out more swiftly to-day than has been possible at any other period in the past history of Australia.

## SHEEP DIPS.

### PROHIBITION OF IMPORTS.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is correct, as reported in the Melbourne press, that importations of sheep dip would be prohibited until adequate protection was afforded under the new Tariff proposals?

2. Will the Minister inform the House what promises, if any, have been made to local manufacturers of sheep dip in regard to (a) restrictions on importations; (b) adequate protection?

Mr. GREENE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes; by proclamation under the Customs Act, dated 26th March, 1919, the importation into the Commonwealth of sheep dip has been prohibited.

2. The local manufacturers, who undertook the making of sheep dip at the request of the Government, to meet a threatened total stoppage of importation, and after British makers had refused to undertake the manufacture here, were promised that, however the matter might develop, they would receive protection for their industry against importations from abroad. Pending the introduction of the new Tariff the only way in which this promise could be given effect to was by prohibition of importation.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER (for Mr. RODGERS) asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether he will inform the House as to the exact terms of the prohibition against the importation of sheep dip, and the circumstances under which such prohibition was proclaimed?

2. For what period is the prohibition to remain operative?

3. Whether the Government is prepared, on representations from the sheep owners of the Commonwealth, to relax the prohibition?

4. Whether the Minister will lay on the table of the House the whole of the papers concerning the application for and the granting of such prohibition?

Mr. GREENE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. By proclamation under the Customs Act, dated 26th March, 1919, the importation of sheep dips, unless with the consent in writing of the Minister for Trade and Customs first obtained, was prohibited. Shipments of dip in port, on the water, or on board at port of shipment on 31st March, 1919 were, however, allowed importation.

The circumstances under which the prohibition of importation became necessary were as follows:—

Towards the end of 1917, owing to the lack of shipping facilities, the position with regard to the supply of sheep dip was becoming acute and the wool-producing interests which were dependent on supplies of dip from overseas were threatened with serious loss. The vital urgency of arranging for supplies was stressed on the Government by the State Governments and pastoral and other bodies. All the raw materials used in the manufacture of dips were also urgently required for munition purposes by the British Government, and it was not considered desirable to continue drawing upon Britain for these essential supplies used in the prosecution of the war, if other arrangements could be made. As the position was becoming daily more acute, negotiations were commenced on behalf of the Commonwealth by Sir John Higgins in the hope that one of the largest British sheep dip manufacturers would establish a factory in the Commonwealth, and various proposals were made to Messrs. Cooper and Nephews with a view to inducing them to manufacture their well-known dips in Australia, and offers were made on behalf of the Government through the chairman of the Central Wool Committee—

- (a) to find in Australia the whole or part of the capital required;
- (b) to establish and work under a licence;
- (c) to purchase the company rights for Australia.

All these proposals failed to induce the British company to establish works in the Commonwealth, the company seeking special conditions regarding plant and machinery, labour, &c., which could not be granted to any applicant. Negotiations were then opened up with the Victor Leggo Company—one of the largest arsenic producers in Australia—to undertake the manufacture of arsenical sheep and cattle dips. That company immediately agreed to accept the responsibility of erecting works, and expended several thousands of pounds in plant and equipment. It is understood that this firm entered into negotiations with other manufacturers which enabled them to jointly guarantee the necessary quantity of dips for Australian requirements. Firms who were prepared to

manufacture dips were promised by the Prime Minister—Mr. Hughes—support against overseas manufacturers. This promise did not apply to any one particular firm or company, but to all who entered into the business. When it became apparent that the requirements of Australia could be fully met by local manufacturers a cable was sent to the Ministry of Munitions in England, which controlled the issue of raw materials to manufacturers, and the priority of shipping space, in the following terms:—

Sheep Dip: Commonwealth Central Wool Committee, after careful consideration, advise unnecessary obtain sheep dips Great Britain, as requirements can be effectively met by local manufacturers.

This cable was despatched on 22nd January, 1918. The British Munitions Department subsequently inquired through the High Commissioner whether Australia actually needed any sheep dip from the United Kingdom. A reply was sent through the same channel, in which it stated, "Please give definite assurance Ministry Munitions importations unnecessary." It was intended, of course, that the space which was being occupied by sheep dip would, instead, be filled with some of the articles which the Munition Ministry in Britain and the Shipping Controller were being daily urged to provide space for. Notwithstanding that the Central Wool Committee advised the Government that the imported sheep dip was not required and the Commonwealth Government advised the British Government accordingly, and notwithstanding also that the Commonwealth Government was constantly pressing the British Government for space for urgently—in some cases desperately—needed goods, a portion of the shipping space still continued to be occupied by sheep dip, and not by things we pressed and asked for. How the shippers of these dips succeeded in obtaining space under these circumstances is not known to the Government. There was, therefore, no option but to impose an embargo on the importation of dips. Sheep and cattle dips may be classified under two main divisions—Arsenical and carbolic, or phenol. Australia produces arsenic as a by-product in the treatment of auriferous arsenical ores, and in quantities, not only sufficient for all Commonwealth requirements, but also for exportation; in fact, shipments of Australian white arsenic have been made to sheep-dip manufacturers in Great Britain. During the war many parcels of arsenical compound were shipped to Great Britain. From coal tar, millions of gallons of which are produced annually at gas works in Australia, ample raw material is available for the production of all phenol dips. Although alkali has still to be imported, it is hoped in the near future that Australia will manufacture its own requirements. The quantity used in sheep and cattle dips is relatively small. As to sulphur, another constituent of most sheep dips, it has been procured from Japan, but there are supplies of this raw material which can be procured from



the islands which, will be controlled under the mandate given to Australia in terms of the Peace Treaty, and from other sources adjacent to Australia. Portion of the sulphur contents of certain powder dips are obtained in Victoria as a by-product in other chemical manufactures. There are now two Australian manufacturers of powder and phenol dips respectively, operating on a large scale. There are also other companies operating on a smaller scale. An exhaustive analytical and physical examination has been made of the several imported and Australian dips—powder, paste, and liquid—on the market, with the result that the Australian article has been found to differ in no material respect from the imported dip, and, value for value, to be a cheaper article. Detailed experiments showed that the local dips did not injure the texture of the wool or its spinning qualities in any way, and the Government was quite satisfied the Australian wool producers had nothing whatever to fear by using the locally-manufactured dips. In support of the view taken by the Central Wool Committee that the Australian-manufactured dip met all the requirements of the sheep owner, it may be mentioned, as revealed by the correspondence in the files of the department, that for some time the Australasian general manager of Messrs. Cooper and Nephews was in communication with Messrs. A Victor Leggo and Company, with a view to the latter firm manufacturing dip in Australia under "Cooper's" label. This in itself should be ample evidence of the value placed by the English company on the locally-manufactured sheep dips. It is the intention that the present embargo shall operate only until such time as adequate protection is afforded to the Australian manufacturer under the new Tariff proposals of the Government. To allow the unrestricted importation of dips at present would be a distinct breach of faith on the part of the Government. If, however, importers are agreeable to such a course, they may make shipments to Australia on the understanding that all such shipments will be held under Customs control pending the introduction of the new Tariff, delivery then to be given subject to the payment of duty. An intimation to this effect has been sent to the British Government.

2. Until the Tariff proposals, making provision for the protection of the local industry, are tabled in the House.

3. Representations made by wool-growers have received careful consideration, but it was decided, under the circumstances mentioned in paragraph 1, that the embargo could not be lifted at present.

4. All the papers will be laid upon the table of the Library at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is his intention to retain the Ministerial embargo on the importation of sheep dip until dealt with during the revision of the Tariff?

2. If so, will he inform the House as to the reasons for the continuance of the prohibition of this preparation?

Mr. GREENE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes.

2. The reasons for the continuance were set out in the replies given to question No. 3.

### PRIVATE LETTER BAGS.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether a special charge is made for the carriage of mails in a private letter bag; if so, what amount?

2. Does the Department also charge the owner of the private bag rail freight on the same?

3. Do the conditions on which this extra charge is based include the average weight of mails carried in the private bag?

4. On what ground does the Postmaster-General justify charging the owner of a private bag the freight on his letters while the general public pay no such charge on their mails?

Mr. WEBSTER.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. Yes; £1, £2, or £4, according to the number of times the bag is made up and despatched weekly.

2. Not to existing bag holders, but we may have to make that a condition of granting new ones.

3 and 4. See answer to No. 2. The charge, if made, would be on the average weight of the bag, and would be the extra amount paid to the railways for its carriage. The railway authorities insist on these bags being treated separately from the general correspondence in strict accordance with the terms of the award. The cost of conveyance in some existing cases would be as high as £18 per annum.

### COUNTRY POSTAL SERVICES.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether he has received the following resolution from the Perth Chamber of Commerce:—"That representations be made to the Postmaster-General that where loss is incurred on postal service to outlying districts in Western Australia the residents of such districts should not be personally called upon to pay any portion of such loss, as such services are necessary in the development of Western Australia."?

2. Does he propose to liberalize the present conditions so as to give more efficient service to outlying districts?

Mr. WEBSTER.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.
2. The concession at present allowed by the Department, in the case of non-paying country mail services, viz., the contribution of the whole of the revenue, plus 60 per cent. of the difference between revenue and expenditure, is, I consider, a liberal one.

### FLOUR MILLERS: EXPORT CONTRACTS.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is a fact that millers in Western Australia have been refused permission to enter into contracts for the export of flour to Egypt and other places at wheat prices considerably over the present local rate?
2. On what basis and under what conditions are millers granted permits for the export of flour?
3. Will the Minister consider the advisability of giving facilities to millers and others to develop our export trade, providing the Board's price for wheat is obtained?

Mr. WATT.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. The Australian Wheat Board has declined to give quotations, not alone to Western Australia, but also to those of other States, for wheat for flour for export to Egypt and other countries at wheat prices considerably over the present local rate. The policy laid down is that the Board should do the business itself, thereby retaining control of chartering and marketing arrangements. Experience has already shown the advantage of this method.
2. Full cargoes for Egypt, Mediterranean ports and European countries will be sold by the Wheat Board. Application to ship parcels will be considered on their merits.
3. This matter has already been fully considered, with the result that it is intended to adhere to the principles laid down.

### COURT MARTIAL, H.M.A.S. AUSTRALIA.

Mr. ORCHARD asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether the attention of the Government has been officially directed to the sentences imposed by the recent court martial in connexion with H.M.A.S. *Australia*?
2. If so, will he state to this House whether these sentences are beyond appeal?

Mr. WATT.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. Yes.
2. I would invite the honorable member's attention to the reply given by me on behalf of the Acting Minister for the Navy to a question on this subject asked by the honorable the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. TUDOR asked the Acting Minister for the Navy, *upon notice*—

Whether there is any appeal from the sentences recently imposed by the Naval Court Martial on members of the Australian Navy?

Mr. WATT (for Mr. POYNTON).—There is no appeal to any higher Court from the sentence of a Naval Court Martial. Higher authority has, however, the right to review the sentence. In this case, the higher authority is the Admiralty, inasmuch as the ships are still under Admiralty control under the terms of a Proclamation issued by the Governor-General dated 10th August, 1914, transferring the vessels of the Commonwealth Naval Forces and all officers and seamen of those vessels to the King's Naval Forces. The Proclamation provided that such transfer should continue until the issue of a Proclamation declaring that war no longer exists. The Acting Minister for the Navy is at present in New South Wales, and on his return I will confer with him on the matter.

### SALE OF WHEAT TO ROUMANIA.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. What quantity, if any, of Australian wheat was sold in Roumania?
2. What was the price, and how paid?

Mr. WATT.—All that is known of this matter is contained in a cablegram from the Prime Minister, that as the result of very strong representation made by him, he has succeeded in obtaining on account of three cargoes of Australian wheat and flour shipped to the British Wheat Commission, and diverted to Roumania, half the difference between American parity and 4s. 9d. per bushel already paid by the British Wheat Commission. This half difference amounts to £106,500, payable in Roumanian bonds.



## TABLING OF PAPERS.

ARREST AND TRIAL OF GUNNER YATES:  
MUTINY ON H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA":  
STEEL FOR SHRAPNEL SHELL: CASE OF  
JAMES MATHEWS.

Mr. FENTON (for Mr. MATHEWS) asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Whether he will lay upon the table of the Library the following:—

- (a) Papers connected with the arrest and trial of Gunner Yates?
- (b) Papers connected with the trial of the men of H.M.A.S. *Australia* for mutiny at Fremantle?
- (c) All papers connected with the endeavour of the Government to secure the secret formula for the manufacture of steel for shrapnel shell in 1914-15?
- (d) Papers connected with the summoning and trial, under the War Precautions Act, of James Mathews, at Maryborough, in 1917?

Mr. WATT.—I shall consult the Ministers concerned, and see if there is any objection to laying these papers on the table of the Library.

## DIVORCED WIVES: DEFENCE ALLOWANCES.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

Whether a mother, who has divorced her husband, and who has had the sole care and control of her children, will receive the same living allowance on the death of her son at the Front as that payable to a widow under similar circumstances?

Mr. WISE.—Yes.

## JAPAN IN THE PACIFIC.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Will he lay on the table of the House a copy of the agreement or understanding between Britain and Japan said to have been approved by Mr. Fisher and Mr. Hughes, whereby Japan was to occupy the islands of the Pacific to the north of the equator, and Great Britain the islands to the south of the equator?

Mr. WATT.—I am not in a position to disclose the contents of any of the secret correspondence which has, during the war, passed between the Governments of Great

Britain and Australia, but on the arrival of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), I will refer the matter to him for his consideration.

## DEPORTATION OF ITALIANS.

Mr. McGRATH asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is a fact that a number of young Italians who were conscripted in this country have been demobilized in Italy?

2. If so, will he make representations to the Italian Government with a view of having these men returned to the States they were living in prior to being conscripted?

Mr. WATT.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. A number of Italian subjects did proceed to Italy for service with the Italian Army, but it is not known whether they have been demobilized or not.

2. The question of the return to Australia of those men has been under consideration for some time, and it is understood that the Italian Government is arranging with the British Government in regard to the allotment of shipping accommodation for these repatriated Italians desirous of returning to Australia.

The Commonwealth Government have agreed to pay half the ordinary soldiers' fares to Australia.

## SENATOR PEARCE IN ENGLAND.

### STAFF AND PAY.

Mr. JOHN THOMSON (for Mr. GREGORY), asked the Assistant Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

Will he lay on the table a statement showing the names, the ages, and the period of service in the Australian Imperial Force, if any, of the pay and other clerks who accompanied Senator Pearce to England?

Mr. WISE.—A statement giving the desired particulars will be prepared and laid on the table of the House.

## POSTAL UNIFORMS.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Why has the Postmaster-General deprived the travelling post officers of their uniform?

2. Whether he will consider the question of restoring the said uniforms?

Mr. WEBSTER.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. The regular travelling sorters have not been deprived of their uniform. They are supplied with the same uniform as other officers entitled to wear it. They are, however, no longer supplied with gold braid on their caps, and I have no intention of altering this arrangement.

2. See answer to No. 1.

I compliment the honorable member on his advocacy of gold braid and decorations.

### PROFITEERING.

Mr. HIGGS asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Whether the Government propose to take any action to prevent or punish profiteering?

Mr. WATT.—If the honorable member will furnish particulars as to the direction in which he believes profiteering to be taking place, the matter will receive attention.

### REPATRIATION: PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS.

Mr. MACKAY asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

1. Whether the public contributions to the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Fund in any State of the Commonwealth have been or are being used for the assistance of returned soldiers by the Repatriation Department?

2. Is it a fact that the trustees of the fund in the State of Queensland have refused to hand over the money held in trust to the Commonwealth; and, if so, will the Minister state the reasons given?

3. Will the Minister consider the advisability of amending the Australian Repatriation Fund Act of 1916, so as to permit the money collected in the various States to be returned to the Local Repatriation Committees for the benefit of the returned soldiers and their dependants, in addition to the assistance provided for in the present regulations under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act of 1917-1918?

Mr. WISE.—These are questions for the Minister for Repatriation. I have been furnished with the following replies:—

1. Yes.

2. Yes. The Queensland War Council, as agents (not trustees, as stated) for the Repatriation Board of Trustees, collected these funds, which should have been placed to the credit of the central fund, in Melbourne. This was not done, and an application has been made for the payment of the money. Although the money was raised as a contribution to the

central fund, the contention of the Queensland War Council is that the funds raised in Queensland, instead of being paid to the central fund, should be available for local distribution.

3. Appeals were made in all the States for contributions to a National Fund vested in the trustees of the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Fund. The terms of the trust for which the funds in question were subscribed required that the money should be paid to a National Fund for the benefit of Australian soldiers generally. This trust passed under the Repatriation Act to the Minister, who, as trustee, is required to distribute the funds subject to the terms of the trust.

In all the States, with the exception of Queensland, the moneys so collected were paid into the central fund, from which general disbursements have been made, without regard to locality. It is not seen how an exception can be made in the case of Queensland.

### RETURNED SOLDIERS.

#### HAND WEAVING OF CLOTH.

Mr. FENTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

1. Whether all matters in connexion with the hand weaving of cloth by returned soldiers have yet been adjusted in a satisfactory manner?

2. If not, will the Minister at an early date place this industry on a stable footing?

Mr. WISE.—Further inquiries are being made, as the information at present available does not justify the contention that the industry is capable of being placed upon a stable footing.

### WAR TROPHIES: DISTRIBUTION.

Mr. MACKAY asked the Assistant Minister for Defence, *upon notice*—

1. Whether the various States of the Commonwealth are to receive an equal number of the war trophies secured by the Australian Imperial Force?

2. Will the Minister endeavour to see that applications from country districts, which so generously responded with enlistments, will receive full consideration in any proposed distribution?

Mr. WISE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. The system of allocation of war trophies cannot be definitely decided until the records of their capture arrive from overseas; but the general principle of it is likely to be that the various States should receive the trophies captured by their own troops, while those whose capture cannot be identified with the troops of any State or district should be exhibited in the Commonwealth collection.



2. The part played by the country districts is fully recognised, and their applications will receive full consideration in any proposed scheme of distribution.

I might say that the Minister for Home and Territories (Mr. Glynn) is chairman of the War Trophies Committee, and further questions on the subject had better be addressed to him.

#### WAR-TIME PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. FINLAYSON asked the Acting Attorney-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether the return asked for on the 13th December, 1918, *re* the prosecutions under (a) War Precautions Act and Regulations, (b) Aliens Restriction Act, (c) Unlawful Associations Act is yet ready for presentation to the House?

2. If not, when will the return be available?

Mr. WISE.—The return in question has been prepared and forwarded to the several States for checking. It will probably be available in the course of a few days.

#### WAR INDEMNITY: AUSTRALIA'S SHARE.

Mr. MACKAY (for Mr. LISTER) asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Whether, in connexion with Australia's share of the indemnity to be paid by the Central Powers, the Government has given, or is prepared to give, any consideration to the question of the justice of allocating a portion of this money to be used for the following purposes:—

- (a) To relieve from the necessity of paying rent under the Commonwealth housing scheme any widow, who remains such, or person who was entirely dependent upon a deceased soldier?
- (b) To augment the pensions of blind and totally incapacitated soldiers,
- (c) To pay interest for a period of five years on loans granted by the Repatriation Department to soldier settlers and others embarking in business?

Mr. WATT.—The Government will consider the indemnity question in all its aspects when it is in receipt of reliable information as to what indemnity, if any, is to be paid to Australia, and as to the period over which such payment would extend.

#### EXPORT OF BUTTER.

Mr. RILEY asked the Minister for Trade and Customs, *upon notice*—

Will the Minister inform the House as to the quantity of butter exported during the

years 1914-15-16-17-18, and the price obtained locally and overseas for same?

Mr. GREENE.—The information desired will be obtained and supplied.

#### REPATRIATION: NURSES.

Mr. PIGOTT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Repatriation, *upon notice*—

Whether all the privileges enjoyed by returned soldiers under the Repatriation Act will be extended to nurses, including land settlement?

Mr. WISE.—Under the Repatriation Act members of the Army Medical Corps Nursing Service accepted or appointed for service outside Australia are regarded as returned soldiers, and are, therefore, eligible for all the benefits of that Act. Inquiries are being made as to whether nurses are included in the land settlement legislation of the several States. The honorable member will be informed of the result of these inquiries.

#### COUNTRY POSTAL FACILITIES.

Mr. LISTER asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

Whether he will lay on the table of the House a return, showing—

1. The number and names of post-offices and receiving offices in Victoria which have been deprived of mail services or have received a notice to the effect that, unless certain payments are made by way of subsidy, their mail services will be curtailed or dispensed with altogether?
2. How many towns outside of the metropolitan area, formerly enjoying two mail services per day, have been reduced to one service?
3. The amount of money expended in remodelling the old post-office at the corner of Elizabeth and Bourke streets?
4. The amount of money expended at the General Post Office, Melbourne, for club and recreation purposes?

Mr. WEBSTER.—Having regard to the cost of preparing the return asked for by the honorable member, the fact that the exercise of economy has to be strictly adhered to, and the relative value of such return when furnished, the circumstances do not, in my judgment, warrant compliance with the request.

## TELEPHONE WIRE.

Mr. PIGOTT asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

What steps is he taking to obtain a supply of telephone wire, so that intending country telephone subscribers may be connected with local exchanges without delay?

Mr. WEBSTER.—Tenders have been called for a supply of wire for country and other subscribers' lines. These close on the 1st and 7th proximo.

## SHAW WIRELESS INQUIRY.

Mr. RILEY asked the Acting Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Will he agree to a full and complete inquiry with regard to the purchase of the Shaw wireless plant at Randwick, such inquiry to be conducted preferably by a High Court Judge?

Mr. WATT.—This matter has already been fully inquired into, and the Government does not propose to re-open it.

## INDUSTRIAL TROUBLE.

## RELIEF OF DISTRESS.

Dr. MALONEY.—By permission of the House, I should like to ask a question of the Acting Prime Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER.—This proceeding at this stage is somewhat irregular. The honorable member for Melbourne intimated to me that he desired the permission of the House to ask the Acting Prime Minister a question of some urgency. Is there any objection? There being none, the honorable member may proceed.

Dr. MALONEY.—Can the Acting Prime Minister give the House any information about the deputation that waited on him last night regarding the unemployment and misery now prevalent in Melbourne?

Mr. WATT.—I received a small number of representatives of the Disputes Committee of the Trades Hall and of the Relief Committee last night, and heard from them statements regarding the cases of distress to which the honorable member refers. I promised to confer to-day with the Premier of Victoria, as this is very largely a State matter, but I found that the Premier was absent from the city, and that conference has, so far, not taken

place. In view, however, of the pressing nature of many of the cases, I ordered the payment to-day of £500 to relieve the most distressful cases, and the circulation from the Defence Department of certain blankets and flannel to meet the necessities of women in urgent need.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Will that treatment be extended to other States?

Mr. WATT.—Yes, wherever the facts are the same.

## SUPPLY BILL (No. 1) 1919-20.

REPATRIATION: NEW INDUSTRIES: VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EXHIBITION OF SOLDIER'S WORK: ADMINISTRATION: SUSTENANCE PAYMENTS—COST OF LIVING AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST: PROFITEERING: CONTROL OF PRICES—NAVIGATION ACT—OIL DEVELOPMENT—FEDERAL CAPITAL—NORTHERN TERRITORY—SHIPBUILDING—RETURNED SOLDIERS AND COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING—THE WAR: TERMS OF PEACE: LEAGUE OF NATIONS—SENATOR PEARCE: DEFENCE ADMINISTRATION: VISIT TO ENGLAND—AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SPIRIT—ENCOURAGEMENT OF PRIMARY PRODUCTION—MANUFACTURE OF SMALL ARMS—INDUSTRY AND LABOUR CONDITIONS: ARBITRATION—WAR-TIME PROFITS TAXATION—EXPORTS AND SHIPPING SPACE—CONTROL OF METALS—PER CAPITA PAYMENTS TO STATES—OVERSEA MAIL SERVICE AND CARGO: SOUTH AUSTRALIA—SETTLEMENT OF SEAMEN'S STRIKE: ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE: SEAMEN'S GRIEVANCES: THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL—NATIONALIST AND LABOUR AIMS—MUTINY ON H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA": SENTENCES OF COURT MARTIAL—MILITARY PUNISHMENTS: CASE OF GUNNER YATES—CONTROL OF SEA TRANSPORT: POSITION OF TASMANIA: LIGHT DUES—PAY OF POSTAL EMPLOYEES—COUNTRY TELEPHONE FACILITIES.

*In Committee of Supply* (Consideration of Governor-General's message):

Debate resumed from 25th June (*vide* page 10091), on motion by Mr. WATT—

That there be granted to His Majesty for or towards defraying the services of the year 1919-20, a sum not exceeding £4,337,335.



**Mr. RILEY** (South Sydney) [3.14].—I was pointing out last night that, notwithstanding the fact that we have had four years of war, and that during that period statements were made from one end of the country to the other that this was an opportune time to start industries, with a view to absorbing our men when they came back from the Front, up to the present nothing of a substantial nature had been done in that direction. I challenged members opposite to produce one instance where big industries had been established, and the honorable member for Illawarra (Mr. Lamond) referred to a new industry for the manufacture of copper wire, started at Port Kembla. No doubt that is a very large work, but it was started by men in private enterprise, and not by this Government. I challenged the Government for their lack of enthusiasm in the establishment of industries to absorb our returned men, but the statement of the honorable member for Illawarra was no reply.

**Mr. PIGOTT**.—Take a walk around the Queen's Hall.

**Mr. RILEY**.—The honorable member for Calare, in pursuance of his policy of partisan barracking for the Government, refers me to the exhibits in the Queen's Hall. They simply show that men returned from the Front have been making tables, chests of drawers, boots, and so forth. If those men go into such industries, they are only replacing other men. That is not solving the problem. I want new industries established. The more returned men you put into the factories to make furniture or boots, the more you are replacing other men. That seems to be the policy of the Government—"Get rid of the men now established in industries and make places for returned men." Surely that is not a statesman-like manner in which to deal with a big problem like this. We have 300 000 men or more coming back from the war, and no more important question can engage the attention of this Parliament than that of settling them in civilian life again. To do that we must open up new industries in this country. I am astonished that the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) should come down

with a Ministerial statement containing no jot or tittle of evidence that the Government are going to deal with this great problem. The statement will not cause any enthusiasm in the House or the country, because the Government hold out no prospect of a big policy. All they give is an array of Bills showing what they are going to do as the session proceeds, but the one outstanding feature should be what they are going to do to absorb the men coming back from the front.

**Mr. CORSER**.—Does not the statement say that the Government are going to encourage new industries?

**Mr. RILEY**.—Yes.

**Mr. CORSER**.—Will not that do it?

**Mr. RILEY**.—I admit that it will provide for a few, but there is no indication of any big effort.

**Mr. ARCHIBALD**.—Is it not largely a matter for the States?

**Mr. RILEY**.—These men coming back from the Front are our men; we have been paying them, and they are under our care. The Government have been discharging them, and putting them on the labour market, whereas it should be the first care of the Government not to discharge them until there is employment for them. Like other members, I have had experience of men coming to me to get them employment. It cannot be done, because there are no avenues open. It is all very fine to talk about settling them on the land, but thousands of them do not want to go on the land, or are not capable of it, and would be a failure if put there. Surely the Government should have come down with a vigorous policy to develop the resources of this country. They have the money to do it. Last year we gave the Government authority to borrow over £40,000,000 to carry on the war. The war practically ceased before Parliament rose, and that money should be used now to employ our men. That should be part of the war expenditure.

**Mr. PIGOTT**.—All that money has been absorbed.

**Mr. RILEY**.—The Acting Prime Minister said yesterday that the mere fact that men were coming back, and would be struck off the pay-list, had relieved the Treasury to a great extent.

Mr. TUDOR.—He said also he had £24,000,000 of loan money still available.

Mr. RILEY.—If that is so, surely the Government can see their way to employ our men. I am disappointed with the Acting Prime Minister's statement, the Committee has reason to be disappointed with it, and I am sure the country will be.

Honorable members opposite say that the community is in a state of industrial discontent and turmoil. Is it any wonder? That state of things applies not only to this country, but all over the civilized world. What is the reason? I have come in contact with men in my electorate who before the war were earning £3 per week; they have had increases, perhaps, to £3 10s. a week, and yet they are worse off to-day than they were before the war, owing to the increase in the cost of living. It is not a question of this Parliament or of this or that party doing it. It seems to be in the air, and wherever a man can make money he makes it, irrespective of whom he is going to injure. The Government should try to deal with this question, and not leave it to the States. This Parliament should be above the States. It has the duty of protecting the people of the whole of the Commonwealth. When profiteering goes on to the extent that we have it in Australia, we must expect discontent, strikes, and the spread of the revolutionary feeling amongst the people. We ought to do everything we possibly can to prevent that.

Mr. ATKINSON.—What will stop it?

Mr. RILEY.—That is a fair question. It is only reasonable that those who urge that a stop should be put to profiteering should be prepared to show how that can be done. As most honorable members are aware, I was for three years a member of the Arbitration Court of New South Wales. In that Court, after inquiring into the profits made in a particular industry, we had power to award the rates of wages to be paid, but we had no power to determine at what price the product of the industry should be sold. I take the view that if our arbitration powers were so extended as to enable the Court not only to fix the wages to be paid in, say, the boot trade, but to determine

the prices at which the boots should be sold—allowing the manufacturer, of course, a reasonable profit—we should put an end to profiteering. The Government should deal with these questions in a proper way. To do what I have just suggested it would be necessary to amend the Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

Mr. WISE.—To amend the Constitution.

Mr. RILEY.—We shall certainly have to do that.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—We tried to get amendments, but failed.

Mr. RILEY.—That was some time ago; but I am satisfied that the people are suffering so severely because of the high cost of living that such an amendment of the Constitution as would empower the Federal Government to deal effectively with profiteering would be readily agreed to. Questions of this kind should be tackled, and tackled at once if the whole country is not to be thrown into a state of chaos. I represent a big industrial centre, I move freely amongst the people, and I know the feeling beneath the crust of public opinion. On every hand there is a deep feeling of resentment in regard to the high cost of living and the profiteering that is going on. One man told me recently that he had been trying for three weeks to save enough money to get his hair cut, but that, because of the high cost of living, he had not been able to do so. Honorable members may smile, but the position is most serious, and I am dealing with it in all earnestness. Thousands of people have not the means to provide the necessities of life. Surely we should be prepared to stop party fighting and to deal with a measure that is well calculated to save Australia from chaos.

Mr. YATES.—The honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Archibald) says he does not know how many of the people are able to exist.

Mr. RILEY.—I am sure that he, like many other honorable members, realizes the position. It is the same all over Australia, and I am disappointed that the Government have not come down with proposals to create new avenues of employment to relieve the distress that exists and to deal effectively with profiteering.



Mr. PICOTT.—Why not bring the shipping strike to an end?

Mr. RILEY.—I did not propose to deal with that matter, but since it has been mentioned, let me say that, had the Government brought the Navigation Act into operation by proclamation the seamen's strike would not have occurred. That measure has remained in abeyance for over three years. Had it been proclaimed before, the conditions of our seamen would have been raised to a decent standard, and this strike would have been avoided.

Mr. PICOTT.—The honorable member helped to put the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill on the statute-book, and the Conciliation and Arbitration Court could deal with the matter.

Mr. RILEY.—But I am speaking of the Navigation Act, which was passed before the honorable member entered this Parliament. It is one of the best measures ever passed by any Legislature. All over the world complimentary references have been made to it, and I contend that it should be at once brought into operation.

Mr. PICOTT.—It is not the fault of this Government; the Leader of the Labour party, when in power, could have brought it into operation.

Mr. RILEY.—We had to await the Royal assent to the Bill. Now that it has been assented to, it should be proclaimed without further delay. The conditions of our seamen would then be brought to the level to which honorable members generally desired, in passing the Bill, to raise them. It was not a party measure. Honorable members generally took a pride in dealing with it, but it still remains a dead letter.

Recently on the New South Wales coast three colliers have been wrecked. There is nothing to regulate the loading of such vessels. The trucks of coal are dropped on the deck of a collier, and before the men have time to trim the coal into the hatches, off go the lines, and away goes the ship to sea. Before she reaches her destination, heavy seas wash over her, and she is lost. If the Navigation Act were in operation to-day, no vessel would be able to leave port until her hatches had been put on and every-

thing made ready to go to sea. We cannot expect our seamen to submit to these hardships lying down. They should have a decent place to sleep and eat in.

Mr. PICOTT.—The Arbitration Court could deal with those matters.

Mr. RILEY.—They have been dealt with in the Navigation Act. The seamen have endured these unsatisfactory conditions during the war, and now that hostilities are over they demand that for which they have waited so long. Is there any reason why the Navigation Act should not be proclaimed?

Mr. ATKINSON.—The Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) has promised that it will be proclaimed.

Mr. RILEY.—Let him proclaim it at once and the seamen's strike will end.

In the schedule to this Bill provision is made for a vote of £4,000 for oil development in Papua. I have been examining an excellent, although brief, report made by the Public Accounts Committee in regard to this question. Oil developmental works have been going on in Papua for the last six years. During that time we have expended nearly £70,000 in boring operations, but have won only 2,000 gallons of oil. There seems to be no finality to these developmental works. The Public Accounts Committee urges that boring operations should be carried out more vigorously in different parts of the Territory, so that we may determine without delay whether we are justified in continuing this expenditure. It was reported in the press a few days ago that the Commonwealth Government had entered into arrangements with the British Government to share in the work of development. I have no objection personally to our co-operating with the British Government, but since we have spent already over £70,000—

Mr. GREGORY.—And most of it has been wasted.

Mr. RILEY.—Since we have already spent on this work £70,000—a good deal of which, as the honorable member says, has been wasted—why should we invite the co-operation of the British Government? If the Commonwealth authorities

are satisfied that oil deposits exist there, they should go on with the work, and the Commonwealth should reap the benefit of any discoveries made. I regret that the Minister for Home and Territories (Mr. Glynn) is not present, since we ought to have from him a statement of what is taking place in Papua. It is unfair that Parliament should be asked again and again to vote money for this work, without having any details to show whether or not the expenditure is justifiable. The position in this regard seems to be very like what is happening under the Act which we passed some time ago providing for a bounty to encourage the production of oil in the Commonwealth. Mr. John Fell has taken advantage of that Act; but I am prepared to say that he is not carrying out what was the intention of the Parliament in passing it. He has not produced even one gallon of refined kerosene; but he is producing crude oil for fuel purposes and obtaining the bounty upon it. He has not produced any of the lubricating oils that we require for machinery purposes, but has grabbed the bounty in respect of the crude article, which does not come up to the required standard. On all these important matters there should be forthcoming statements by the responsible Ministers. This man is evading the terms on which it was decided that the bounty should be payable.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then he has no right to the bounty.

Mr. RILEY.—He is receiving it.

Mr. TUDOR.—If that is so, the Minister responsible for its payment should be impeached.

Mr. RILEY.—The trouble is that we cannot induce a Minister to remain here and listen to us when we speak. Our object in passing the Bounties Act was to encourage the local production of oil and so to bring down the local price of petrol. The price of petrol is higher in Australia than in any other part of the world, and the payment of this bounty has done nothing to bring about the desired result.

The next question to which I desire to refer is that of the Federal Capital. The Constitution provides that the Seat of

Government shall be in the State of New South Wales. That was one of the conditions on which the State of New South Wales entered into the Federal compact, but it has not been carried out. In respect of other States, promises that were not actually embodied in the Constitution have been honoured. For instance, the people of Western Australia during the Federal campaign were promised that if they accepted the Constitution Bill, the trans-Australian railway would be built. There was no constitutional undertaking that that line would be built, but we have carried out our promise in regard to it.

Mr. YATES.—The Commonwealth has not kept the promises made to South Australia.

Mr. RILEY.—We have honoured them; we have taken over the burden of the Northern Territory, and have thus relieved South Australia of great responsibility and expense.

Mr. YATES.—Not at all; South Australia would have developed the Territory.

Mr. FLEMING.—She had better take it back again.

Mr. RILEY.—South Australia for many years tried in vain to develop the Northern Territory, and the burden was bringing her into a state of bankruptcy when the Federal Government relieved her of it. If South Australia would ask for the return of the Territory, I believe that every member of the Parliament would agree to the request and give her a bonus for taking it back. Then, again, certain promises were made to Tasmania. They, too, have been observed, although they were not part and parcel of the Constitution. The representatives of New South Wales did not object to the honouring of these promises; but although eighteen years have elapsed since the inauguration of the Commonwealth, there is no indication that the people of Victoria desire to allow the Seat of Government to be transferred to New South Wales. I do not blame the representatives of Victoria, because they are very comfortable here. An honorable compact was made, and the people of New South Wales are entitled to have it kept. There is strong resentment in that State of the treatment which



it has received in that regard, and unless this Parliament gives New South Wales a fair deal, there will be bitter opposition to the continuance of the Federal Administration in Melbourne. The Government have spent a great deal of money in preliminary work at the Capital site. A huge reservoir has been constructed, and a complete water supply is now available; there is a large electric generating plant in order to supply light and power to the district and brickworks have been constructed in readiness for building operations. But all these enterprises are idle. The Federal Territory comprises 900 square miles of land belonging to the Commonwealth, and it is certain that when this Parliament is moved to Canberra a large population will lease the land, and the Treasury will receive from that source a yearly increasing revenue, which will help to defray the expenses of government. I have no desire for this Parliament's venue to be changed to Sydney. The Commonwealth Parliament should have a home of its own. The longer we remain in Melbourne, the greater will be the expense in the creation of new office accommodation. The construction of the Federal Capital would provide profitable employment for many returned soldiers. If this Parliament is sincere in regard to the promise to create a Federal Capital in New South Wales, the present is an opportune time to proceed with the work, because thousands of the soldiers who are returning to Australia are skilled in various building trades, and will require employment.

Mr. YATES.—Build the Federal Capital as a soldiers' memorial.

Mr. RILEY.—That would be a good idea. The greatest portion of the Federal revenue is derived from New South Wales, but the people of that State are becoming very dissatisfied with the treatment they have received in connexion with the Federal Capital compact. The Capital city was to have been created within the first ten years of the Federation, so it cannot be said that the people of New South Wales have been unduly impatient. I hope that this Parliament

will take the present opportunity to proceed with the establishment of its own National home.

Some time ago we were informed that the Government had evolved a great scheme for shipbuilding, and that they had let contracts for the construction of wooden ships. But, even before the war ended, they had discovered that the wooden ships were a mistake, that they could not be run profitably, that their maximum speed was 7 knots in a favorable wind and no current, and that if they were navigated too close to a current they would run on to the rocks. Consequently, the Government were forced to cancel the contracts for wooden ships. On the Parramatta River one can see on the slips the ribs of these partially-built ships. What is to become of them? I should like the Government to explain their reasons for abandoning that portion of the shipbuilding policy, and to state the amount they have paid for the cancellation of the contracts. What has been the total cost of this blunder to the Commonwealth?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—That statement does not harmonize with the speeches which the honorable member made some time ago when urging the Government to proceed with shipbuilding.

Mr. RILEY.—I urged the building of ships, not of 7-knot toys.

Mr. GREGORY.—Some of the wooden ships built in America averaged 7 knots throughout a voyage under all conditions.

Mr. RILEY.—I do not doubt that, but my reference was to the contracts for fourteen wooden ships to be built in Sydney and Melbourne. The Government have realized the folly of proceeding with those contracts, and we have a right to know the conditions of the cancellation.

In regard to home defence, is it the policy of the Government to compel returned soldiers to complete their training under the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act? Men have come to me and said, "We have been three years at the Front, and are now compelled to parade and be drilled by compulsory training officers."

Mr. PALMER.—I have had many such complaints.

Mr. RILEY.—That policy is not fair. Will not the Government consider the exemption of men who have had military service abroad?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The Assistant Minister gave me a distinct promise in the House last year that that policy had been discontinued.

Mr. RILEY.—If the application of compulsory training to returned soldiers is persisted in, the only result will be to create further resentment of the military system. In my opinion, all compulsory training should be suspended for the next ten or fifteen years. We have no need to train a civilian army at the present time, when we have 300,000 veteran soldiers fully trained in every branch of warfare. If we are desirous of economizing, this is clearly an expenditure that we can dispense with. Parliament should have an opportunity to express an opinion on this question.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The honorable member has reached the time limit.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [3.44].—I was very pleased to hear the remarks of the honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) in regard to the Commonwealth control of the Northern Territory. The honorable member expressed the opinion that this Parliament would be only too pleased to hand the Territory back to the South Australian Government. It seems to me an inglorious record that, after all the years of control of the Territory by this Parliament, and after the enormous expenditure there, members opposite should now realize how absurd the Federal administration has been. I am convinced that, with a sane policy, we could make something of the Territory; but by the insane policy initiated and, to a large extent, controlled, by honorable members opposite, we have destroyed what might have been a fine Federal asset. Yet we hear the honorable member urging further Government control in connexion with the oil-fields of Papua. He desires that this Parliament shall have the same power and con-

trol over the Papuan oil industry as it has over the affairs of the Northern Territory, and I suppose with the risk of the same waste of expenditure and general failure. If it is demonstrated that oil in commercial quantities exists in Papua, and the Government will throw the industry open to private enterprise, with certain control reserved to the Federal authority in regard to export there will be a probability of success attending that venture. But I have no faith in Government control of the enterprise.

The honorable member for South Sydney condemned also the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton) for his efforts to build ships. Had the honorable member for Grey been in charge of the Navy Department when war broke out, and made the same effort then as he did later, Australia would have built ships which would have been a great asset to us. The Acting Minister deserves more than the ordinary measure of credit for the efforts he made to alleviate the difficulties that were imposed upon us by the scarcity of shipping.

Mr. RILEY.—I indorse everything he did in regard to steel ships.

Mr. GREGORY.—My only complaint is that the Acting Minister's effort came too late. I condemn former Ministers for the Navy—Senator Pearce, Mr. Jensen, and Sir Joseph Cook—for the lethargy they displayed. In the early stages of the war I urged the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) to call for tenders and offer a bonus for shipbuilding by private enterprise, and, had action been taken then, all of us would have been pleased with the result. I realize that the honorable member for Grey made a big, strenuous, and business-like effort to solve the shipping problem, and had the war continued his work would have been more fully appreciated.

Undoubtedly it is too early for us, in this debate, to discuss the conditions of Peace. We have read only a summary of the agreement, and we do not know fully how Australia is to be treated in regard to the repayment of our war expenditure. All matters arising out of the Peace agreement will come up for discussion.



later, and I presume Parliament will have full opportunity for dealing with the various questions. But I may say, in passing, that I have very little sympathy with the so-called League of Nations. There has been too much theorizing and delay in connexion with the Peace negotiations. The deliberations of the Conference were too protracted, and the resultant delay is largely responsible for the trouble and unrest that have developed. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that we must continue in the future to make ample provision for the naval and military protection of Australia.

Some comment has been made upon the Australian representation in London. It seems to me strange that, with the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) in London, in addition to the High Commissioner—I do not know for what reason we have a High Commissioner now—it should have been found necessary to send Senator Pearce to England. His administration of the Defence Department was bad. I have no admiration for his Ministerial record, and I think a grave mistake was made in sending him to London. The efficient work which has been done in connexion with the repatriation of Australian soldiers was undoubtedly due to the efforts of that splendid engineer and soldier, Sir John Monash; and I am not at all satisfied with the action of the Government in sending Senator Pearce to England to attend to repatriation matters.

Mr. RILEY.—The Government continued to deny that there was any intention to send him to England.

Mr. GREGORY.—There was a lot of secrecy about the matter. Big troubles are in store for us, and there are two great essentials which must be considered by this Parliament. The first is the building up of a national spirit amongst the people of Australia. No country in the world made such a magnificent response as Australia made in connexion with this great war; but after all the sacrifices our men and women have made, it is indeed hard that so many of our people have

such little faith in their country. Something should be done to build up a national spirit. The Americans are doing much in this direction. At cinematograph theatres one can see pictures illustrating the marvellous methods they are adopting to build up that spirit. Certainly, there is a good deal of bombast about it, and a great deal of credit is claimed that I think is hardly due to them; but I commend them for the evidence they have shown of earnestness in building up a spirit of patriotism. One picture in which this was illustrated was shown at a picture show I recently attended in Sydney. It was followed by a picture of a lacrosse match in Sydney, and the next picture was that of a football match in Melbourne. I think it would be an act of wisdom on the part of the Government if they were to appoint some one like General White, who recently returned to Australia, to organize some method by which a great national spirit might be created among the people of Australia. I read General White's recent speeches with a great deal of pleasure. He is doing his best to build up a great national spirit.

Mr. RILEY.—Let us get to the national Capital.

Mr. GREGORY.—We must first get rid of the vile spirit of internationalism that is abroad to-day, and that section of the community who go about preaching that "the whole world is ours," yet in the very next breath have no time for the brotherhood of nations when they fear the entry of goods from an alien country. Their policy in one direction is narrow and cramped, yet they tell us that we should form one of the brotherhood of nations, and be internationalists. My view is that we ought to build up a great Australian spirit—or rather an Imperial spirit, seeing that our future rests wholly on the protection afforded by the British Navy.

Another great essential for the future of Australia is the stimulation of production, particularly primary production. We have only to look at *Knibbs* to see what Australia exports.

Mr. CORSER.—We must have both primary and secondary production in order to be successful.

Mr. GREGORY.—There is no reason why we cannot have both. Any person who believes in building up primary production must realize that the home market is the best; but I have no wish to strangle primary production in order to build up trumpery industries in the cities, as many of them are. By the time we have paid for our war debt, and provided the money which will be required for repatriating our soldiers, the public debt of Australia, States and Commonwealth, will be between £950,000,000 and £1,000,000,000—nearly £200 per head of the population. Is it proposed to liquidate that debt by crippling the primary industries, and increasing production in the cities? Surely every one admits that taxation is unduly heavy in Australia at the present time. Our revenue has increased year after year, and that fact has undoubtedly led to the grossest extravagance, not only in Commonwealth administration, but also in the administration of the States. Many legislators hold the belief that we can keep on taxing the people, and that the Government can spend the people's money better than can the people themselves. This belief has tended to extravagance and to the destruction of that private enterprise which alone can build up industries in this country, and which would be started were the people allowed to retain in their own pockets the money which the State now draws from them by way of taxation. The Treasurer will have a heavy task, and our only hope in the future is to stimulate our primary industries. Establish as many factories as you like, but with whom must they compete? With the exception of a few har-vesters, and a certain quantity of leather, although factories have been receiving the benefit of high duties, have we ever sent any manufactured products from Australia? In our very best year, I do not suppose we have exported manufactured goods to the value of £5,000,000.

Mr. WEST.—We have sent abroad khaki for the soldiers.

Mr. FENTON.—And small arms ammunition.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member should not say anything about small arms. We did not send away a rifle after the first four months of the war.

Mr. FENTON.—I said "small arms ammunition."

Mr. GREGORY.—From a very reliable source I have heard that one in every ten, and sometimes one in every twenty cartridges manufactured here contained two bullets. The manufacture of small arms at Lithgow has been a damnable disgrace. We sent our boys away from this country with such vile weapons that we might just as well have sent them to the Front with their hands tied behind their backs.

Dr. MALONEY.—Some of the rifles were dashed bad.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member was in Perth, and saw some of them. The great mistake in connexion with the Small Arms Factory is that its administration is in the hands of the Minister for Defence. I give way in my belief in private enterprise to this extent that I hold that the making of munitions of war should be absolutely under the control of the Government, but the controlling Minister should be any other Minister but the Minister for Defence. When the officers of the Defence Department found that the rifles manufactured at the Small Arms Factory were bad, they could not complain, because they would be blaming their own Minister. They should be in the position to say exactly what they require, and refuse to accept anything that is not up to the highest standard, no matter what it may cost to attain that standard. But this cannot be done so long as the Small Arms Factory is under the control of their own Minister. It should be under the control of another Minister or special Commissioners.

It is the wealth we receive from our primary industries that enables us to build up our secondary industries, and we must not continue to build a wall of China all round Australia. We must not do as the honorable member for Maribyrnong (Mr. Fenton) suggested a couple of sessions ago, when he said that there were plenty of people in Australia to manufacture all Australia's requirements, and therefore we should not permit any machinery to be imported. It is preposterous to put forward such an argument, and absurd to propose to



impose huge duties that will absolutely prevent articles coming into this country from abroad. If that is done, where shall we get our revenue in the future when we lose the Customs taxation? What sort of an impost will be placed on those who have to take all the risks of fire, flood, and drought in their endeavour to develop Australia's resources, despite all the difficulties put in their way, and despite the enormous expenditure which has to be incurred by them, and which of recent years has so considerably increased? It is only by increasing our production that we can increase the population. Unless a demand exists, it is useless to commence to build up factories. If we had a population of 15,000,000 or 20,000,000 persons, we would find industries starting by leaps and bounds. If there were only less Government control and less interference, many people would be found coming here to help us to build up our secondary industries. I have been told that certain gentlemen came from America for the purpose of establishing a factory here, and that they were prepared to spend £1,500,000; but after having been here for three or four months, and seeing the labour conditions and food control in Australia, they decided to recommend their people not to spend the money in establishing the enterprise.

Mr. RILEY.—There is enough labour trouble in America.

Mr. GREGORY.—There is labour trouble everywhere.

The honorable member drew attention to the trouble which was due to profiteering; but a great deal of it is caused by the very people that the honorable member should condemn—the red-raggers and the Industrial Workers of the World—who flaunt the laws so freely. No matter what party is in power it is the bounden duty of every member of Parliament to insist upon the observance of the law. Of course, we should do our best to pass legislation that will provide for conditions that will ameliorate many of these troubles; but, at the same time, when we have laws on our statute-books, it is the duty of honorable members opposite, equally with

honorable members on this side, to endeavour to induce the people to comply with them. Certainly there has been no equitable attempt to prevent profiteering. Price-fixing, as carried out, has been an absolute absurdity. Generally, men were appointed to fix prices who knew nothing about trade, and there was always a considerable amount of undue interference that only served to increase the price of commodities. I must say that it "broke me up" to find the Government introducing an amendment of the War-time Profits Tax Act, which proved of great advantage to commission agents, who here and in Sydney made huge fortunes out of the war. Under this Bill, no matter if a commission agent made £30,000 or £50,000 last year, or the year before, he has not to pay one sixpence in taxation, whereas poor devils who have gone out into the back country, and burdened themselves with debt in developing their holdings, at the same time running all the risks of fire and drought, have to pay 75 per cent. if they show a profit of £5,000 or £10,000.

Mr. FLEMING.—And possibly half of that profit is represented by stock, and not realizable.

Mr. GREGORY.—Often, it is a book profit, and, at the same time, such a man may be heavily indebted to some financial institution. It is not too late to provide by legislation that a person who has made an income of over £1,000 beyond his average annual income shall have his case specially investigated, and if there is any trace of profiteering, shall be called upon to pay 50 per cent., or, if need be, 100 per cent. in taxation.

Mr. RILEY.—A lot of the retail men ought to be taxed.

Mr. GREGORY.—I feel sure of it. It seems strange that commission agents should be able to come here, and get special legislation to prevent their being called upon to pay war-time taxation.

Mr. FENTON.—What Government passed that legislation?

Mr. GREGORY.—The present Government; but the other side, when in power, did nothing.

Mr. TUDOR.—I stopped stuff being sent away.

Mr. GREGORY.—The Labour Government did bring in a Bill, but it was a stupid Bill not applicable to Australia.

Mr. TUDOR.—I was out of the Government when that Bill was brought in.

Mr. GREGORY.—My desire is to build up and encourage primary production in Australia, realizing that this represents the only means whereby we can pay interest on our great war debt, and increase prosperity and population. The primary producer has to rely to a great extent on the State Governments for all the assistance he gets. What assistance is rendered by the Commonwealth Government by means of the Post Office? One would think that the utmost possible effort would be made to afford postal and telephone facilities to every one who has gone out into the bush.

Then, again, in regard to stock, very little is being done to help the producer. What I desire is a distinct promise from the Government that if freezing works are established on the north-west coast, every encouragement will be given by way of bonuses to ships with freezing space for the purpose of getting the produce to market. I am informed, however, that when these industries are established will be time enough to consider the question; but they cannot be established unless there is some assurance of being able to reach the market. I suggest that the Board of Trade should see that it is fully informed of the possibilities of trade from the outlying portions of Australia, so that it may devise the best means of rendering assistance in the way I have indicated. In Western Australia, I motored through an avenue of grapes, three-fourths of a mile in length, all of export variety, capable of supplying thousands of cases, all ready to be sent to the Old Country; but I was unable to get space for a single case. I do not blame the Government, because I believe the Imperial Government released only apples, but what I have said certainly shows the great importance of encouraging such industries. From one little patch of 15½ acres in Western Australia, a man made a gross revenue of £2,196 in grapes, currants, and raisins last year; and this will give

some idea of the wonderful wealth there is in the country. Had there been room on the ships to take this produce away to the extent of thousands of cases, wealth would have been produced on which we could have levied taxation. But, instead of this, a great proportion of the grapes was allowed to rot. In regard to apples there does seem to have been some stupidity on the part of the Government—or, it may be, some people have too much power. In Western Australia we have grown a lot of apples, and we were anxious to find out if space was available on the *Somerset*. We were advised that there would be room for about 8,000 cases; but I saw an advertisement in the *West Australian* of the agent of Messrs. Jones and Company, of Tasmania, announcing that that firm had room for 10,000 cases on the *Somerset*, and asking people to send in to that quantity, with a return of, I think, 7s.

Mr. TUDOR.—I hold no brief for Jones and Company, but may not the firm have already paid for the space, and were merely sub-letting it?

Mr. GREGORY.—That was the advertisement of the agent for Messrs. Jones and Company; and if such were the case, they had no right for priority of space in Western Australia. In this connexion I have to complain of an insolent letter from the Prime Minister's Department—

Messrs. Jones and Company are indignant that such a report as that from Perth, which was published in the *Melbourne Age* of the 1st instant, and which is on similar lines to the telegram sent by you, should have been circulated.

I sent a telegram setting out the facts, and yet the Department has the impertinence to tell us that Messrs. Jones and Company are indignant. At the same time the Department apparently did not think it worth while to see what kind of advertisement it was that had appeared.

Mr. RILEY.—Who signed that letter?

Mr. GREGORY.—It was signed by the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) for the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt), but I do not blame the Acting Prime Minister, nor do I suppose that the Postmaster-General read the letter or knew the facts. I submit that the Departmental officer was wrong in sending out a letter of that sort. We do not wish



anybody to get preference, but only that every State shall have a fair deal.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—It is about time the growers got a fair deal.

Mr. GREGORY.—I am ascertaining the requirements of the growers in Western Australia, and I propose to ask the Western Australian representatives in this House to form themselves into a committee in order to see whether something cannot be done to secure fair treatment.

The only other matter I desire to refer to is that of the metal industry. I do not propose to go fully into the question now, because it is one that ought to be discussed by itself. However, unless something is done in the near future, it will be necessary to move the adjournment of the House, or take some other drastic measures for relief. The action of the Government in this regard has built up a monopoly which is bound to prove more dangerous than any German monopoly we ever had—in short, the conditions which have followed the Government's action are absolutely disgraceful. We ask people to go out prospecting, and we are all pleased when we hear of some poor fellow, after long labour, finding something good, because we hope that extensive employment will follow.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The honorable member has reached his time limit.

Mr. GREGORY.—If no other member wishes to speak, I shall be very glad to take my second half-hour now. There were three men who, some time ago, made a wonderful discovery of lead, which was then at a very high price. Almost out of one small pot hole these men took £70,000 worth of lead in less than two years, and yet the profit they got was just under £4,000.

Mr. RILEY.—Who got the rest?

Mr. GREGORY.—Those in control should answer that. Even had the men got £25,000 it would only have been a fair margin out of a rich little pocket. I shall not mention names, but there is a mining man who was compelled to send his tin oxide over here for treatment, and there was a delay of about four months when he sought permission to sell it, involving a loss of something like £60 per ton to him. The State smelter is compelled

to send standard copper of 98 per cent. over here for treatment and realization at a cost of about £4 9s. a ton; in fact, it is worthless to produce anything under 11 per cent. over in Western Australia, whereas 5 per cent. ore ought to be worth working.

Representatives of New South Wales ought to realize that a big company in that State is being harassed by the Government; and that hundreds of men are in consequence thrown out of employment, causing a big reduction in trade service and employment generally. If 300 or 400 men are deprived of their work, it must affect 1,000 or more other people. The company to which I am referring applied for permission to sell their product, but they were sent from the Attorney-General's Department to the Prime Minister's Department, and told to go to the Copper Producers Association; but they have failed to obtain a permit to trade. This company, however, refused to join the Copper Producers Association at a cost of £500, pay 1 per cent. on the value of their output, and lose control of their product for the next fifty years. The Government will not tell these people that they must join, but they keep on prevaricating; and month after month elapses, while the mines are closed and hundreds are thrown out of employment. These people have their own plant, their own mine and their own furnaces and electrolytic plant, and have capital to treat their own ore. They say—

No doubt you are aware that electrolytic copper is now quoted at £90 per ton, and we see no reason why we should not try and make a start if we can only get permission to dispose of our finished product when made.

Why not? No doubt the Government are justified in preventing the export of metals to this or that country if there are special and proper reasons for such a prohibition; and we have no knowledge of what the Peace conditions may be in this regard. The Government, however, have no right to place in the hands of a small clique—the Zinc Producers Association or the Tin or Copper Association—an absolute monopoly.

Mr. FENTON.—Who are the syndicate—the Broken Hill people, or who?

Mr. GREGORY.—The Broken Hill people objected to join the Zinc Producers Association, and so did the Mount Lyell Company. They were told by Sir John Higgins, when the Conference was held, that he would ask the Attorney-General to use the strongest powers he possessed rather than the scheme should fail, and Mr. Mahon, who was then Acting Attorney-General, said they would have to accept the scheme within forty-eight hours in the letter and spirit in which it was proposed. So these people were forced to join, and, according to the agreement, they had to pay £500 to join, and 1 per cent. for the handling of the ore. And they gave to that Association, on which they certainly had some representation, for they had one director each, the absolute control of all their output—that is the making of their contracts and the fixing of the price—for the next fifty years. It is abominable that these corporations, the biggest in Australia, should have been forced into an Association of that kind.

Mr. RILEY.—Do you not think that all these committees ought to be abandoned now, and things allowed to return to their normal state?

Mr. GREGORY.—In this instance there would have to be legislation.

Mr. RILEY.—I mean the Wool Committee, the Copper Committee, and the Metals Committee.

Mr. GREGORY.—They have never had the force of law, and that is where the equivocation comes in here. Other than the regulation which gives the Customs Department the power to prevent the exportation of goods to any country, there is not even a regulation. It is all done *sub-rosa* and by force; it is simply "bluff."

Mr. FENTON.—Is it true that a few firms have control of the shipping of some of these metals yet?

Mr. GREGORY.—Not of the shipping, but the Association has control of the export. My people say, "We will not join the Association; we are not going to give it the control of our mines," for that is what it really means.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—They got better terms from the Germans.

Mr. GREGORY.—Have we not better people to trade with than the Germans? The Government, of course, are justified in saying, "We will not allow this stuff to be exported to any country where German firms may get hold of it."

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—This was done to smash the German combine.

Mr. GREGORY.—What is being built up now is a combine worse than any German combine. Why give to a small directorate in Melbourne the absolute control of the zinc or copper production of Australia? Why, if we produce copper in Western Australia, should we be compelled to have our contracts made and to sell our copper through the Copper Producers Association in Melbourne?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—I do not suppose you will be now, but it was better than the Germans.

Mr. GREGORY.—I have told the honorable member repeatedly that if you joined that Association, you agreed to give it the control of your product for fifty years.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That cannot stand in a Court.

Mr. GREGORY.—It is an agreement, and it exists.

Mr. FENTON.—Some of the people who control the metals now are the people who used to deal with the Germans in the pre-war period.

Mr. GREGORY.—That is a question for the House to deal with; but there is no doubt in my mind that an effort was made by a certain section to manipulate the control of these metals. When these agreements are concluded, do they not give to that Association the absolute control of the output for the next fifty years? They certainly do unless we pass legislation to annul them on the ground that they were signed under duress. I was not prepared to speak on this subject to-day, because a great number of facts and figures have to be got ready, and all I have stated are facts which I have memorized for some time, through having to deal with the subject so often.

As regards the building up of the primary production of Australia, the primary producer has to depend to a very great extent on the States for assistance. He cannot get it from the Commonwealth. This country is too great for us



in this Parliament to be able to realize the difficulties and vicissitudes of many of the outlying industries. The Government have suggested that, owing to the demands on the Commonwealth purse, a big reduction should be made in the *per capita* payment that we agreed to make to the States.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—There is no hope of them carrying that through the Senate.

Mr. GREGORY.—I am afraid they will carry it: I want the Government to understand my position distinctly in the matter. I came here as one who believes in the Federation. I do not believe in Unification, and will do all I can to prevent any such scheme, because the Treasurer's proposal means the absolute destruction of the States, and this must be followed by Unification.

Mr. MATHEWS.—It may injure the State Legislatures; but it will not injure the peoples of the States.

Mr. GREGORY.—It will injure the States, because this Parliament cannot help to build up the industries of remote States like Queensland and Western Australia, and if you injure those States you will injure Australia. Honorable members here have not the necessary knowledge, and with the small representation we have here we shall be absolutely destroyed.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Good old parochial idea!

Mr. GREGORY.—I have a great area to represent, while the honorable member represents only a few yards in comparison.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I have flesh and blood to represent.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member does not represent a much greater number of people. I represent about 40,000, and the honorable member may have 7,000 or 8,000 more in his electorate; but the difference is very small in proportion. There have not been in Victoria and New South Wales the objections to this proposal that are coming from the other States. That is rather short-sighted on the part of the two States I have named. There has been an enormous expenditure for war purposes in

Australia during the past three or four years, nearly the whole of it in Victoria and New South Wales, which have had a prosperity in consequence that will not continue in the future. They are, therefore, working on false premises if they do not realize how this scheme will affect them later on. I hope that all those who believe in the Federation, and in helping the States to carry on the work of development, all those who want to see the best interests of Australia conserved, will work together for the purpose of preventing the Government from carrying a proposal which, if given effect to, must tend to destroy the Federation, and result in Unification. Of course, those who believe in Unification will support the Treasurer's proposal; but I hope the good sense of the House will prevent its passage, and that the Treasurer will see the danger of endeavouring to make it law.

Mr. ARCHIBALD (Hindmarsh) [4.28].—I do not intend to delay the passage of Supply, because it has been customary for Supply Bills prior to the present Parliament to run through in a very short space of time, and I have known a Bill covering a much larger amount of Supply than this to be dealt with in less than ten minutes. I do not complain of the action of the Opposition in debating this Bill. As the House has been in recess for six months, it is not at all surprising that honorable members on both sides should wish to discuss a few pressing questions. In considering the grant of Supply to His Majesty, we should, I think, be confined to the old constitutional practice, by which the House of Representatives declined to pass Supply until the Government had redressed grievances, or promised to do so. There are, of course, grievances and grievances. Some are of a most pressing character, and we should be following the old constitutional practice much more closely if we debated them only; but under our Standing Orders practically everything under the sun can be made the subject of a grievance, and discussed on Supply.

I propose to call the attention of the Government to one to two matters. It is not my intention to quarrel with them.

My idea is more to urge improvements in the future, because what is past is past, and all the talking by this House, or writing by the press, is of no avail unless it prevents a recurrence of the practices complained of. During the war, up to the time of the armistice, things worked as well as could be expected in Australia, considering the difficulties under which the Empire laboured and the gigantic nature of the struggle in which it was suddenly involved. But since the armistice was signed the Government have shown some neglect of the interests of the outlying States. We, in South Australia, expected a great deal from Federation, and there is no doubt that in many respects we have reaped great benefits, although we have not got all that we would like. It is a peculiarity of human nature to be always wanting what we are unable to get, but the smaller States have suffered, and in the instances I propose to give, my own State has certainly suffered unnecessarily. Since the armistice, there seems to have grown up an idea that Sydney and Melbourne constitute the bull's eye of Australia. They are the only two great places recognised either in Australia or overseas, and no other part of Australia seems to be in the reckoning. In dealing with these grievances, I propose to put the blame where I believe it should attach. It does not suit my book to attack the Government merely because they are the Government. There is no sense in that, and it is of no benefit to the people.

The position in regard to the delivery of mails has not been satisfactory since the armistice was signed. During the war they were distributed with far greater regularity in South Australia, and the arrangements were better as regards both the outgoing and the incoming mails. Since the armistice, I have known as long a period as ten days to elapse before mail matter has reached South Australia, although the business people of Melbourne and Sydney have had their letters days and days before. What position is a commercial man in Adelaide placed in when mail matter has been distributed in the eastern States several days before he gets his?

Mr. WEST.—That only applies to the American mail.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—The honorable member knows Sydney very well, and he will give me credit for knowing what occurs in Adelaide. The American mails come in, and leave that city at any hour. The Deputy Postmaster-General for South Australia makes up the mail for despatch on a certain date, but suddenly receives from Sydney an order countermanding his previous instructions, with the result that the American mail steamer leaves with mails to be sent on to London from Sydney and Melbourne alone. There seems to be neither rhyme nor reason for the present system, under which the people of South Australia are placed at a great disadvantage.

Mr. YATES.—The honorable member is referring more particularly to the American mails?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—I am referring to the system generally. Only recently a mail from America suddenly turned up at Adelaide, and no one knew that it was coming. Some of our mails come direct from the Old Country. When a Blue Funnel or Aberdeen liner is about to leave England with troops, the postal authorities in London should be advised, so that they can despatch mails by her. There is a very good law which provides that the King's mails may be placed on any vessel, and when a troopship is leaving the Old Country for Australia direct, the postal authorities at Saint Martin's le Grand should be advised that mails, if despatched by her, would reach Australia sooner than if sent by one of the ordinary mail steamers. I have gone into this matter very carefully at the request of citizens of Adelaide, who have been subjected to much annoyance, but the quarantine restrictions are such that one does not care to visit Melbourne too frequently to inquire into it, more especially when one has to come from a "clean" to an "infected" State. My contention is that no overseas mails should leave Australia unless mails from South Australia are also carried. I am surprised that the postal authorities here are unable to deal with so simple a matter. The regular despatch of overseas mails is of far more importance than are many of the



wonderful postal reforms of which we hear so much. I am also at a loss to account for the extraordinary and eccentric system of despatching mails to Australia from the Old Country. They come sometimes *via* America and sometimes direct. When inquiry is made as to the failure of the postal authorities at Home to take advantage of a vessel coming direct to Australia, the answer is made that no information as to the intended departure of such vessels is afforded them. What are our representatives doing in London? I do not expect the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) or the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) to take action in regard to a matter of this kind, but surely the High Commissioner's Office should be able to deal effectively with it. Is the High Commissioner's Office doing anything at all?

Mr. YATES.—The honorable member will be given the "kick out" from his party.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—That would not occasion me any more worry than I suffered when I was kicked out of the Official Labour party. From what I hear there is nothing to prevent the High Commissioner communicating with Saint Martin's le Grand either by telephone or messenger as to the approaching departure of a vessel for Australia by which mails could be shipped here. The High Commissioner's Office should be in a position to advise the British postal authorities of such matters, and to inform the postal authorities here whenever a mail is despatched, and when it is likely to arrive. As it is, it would appear to be no one's business to do so. The well-paid officers of the High Commissioner's Department should be able to put an end to the present eccentric system, which is causing so much annoyance to the people of South Australia.

Mr. PAGE.—Why should not the Commonwealth Cabinet Ministers at Home deal with the matter?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—The High Commissioner should deal with it. My remarks have no personal application. My contention is that the High Commissioner should take the initiative in these matters.

Dr. MALONEY.—And he would if he had the power.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—Is it impossible for him to communicate with the British postal authorities in the way I have just suggested? We ought certainly to have a more regular mail system.

Mr. PAGE.—The present Government are disorganized. They could not create any system. On the honorable member's own showing, they cannot even arrange for the proper arrival and despatch of oversea mails.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—That is a weakness on the part of the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster).

Mr. PAGE.—Of course, it is.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—My desire is to impress on the Government the necessity for placing Adelaide in the same position that other State Capitals occupy in this respect.

The honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) has urged—and I agree with him—that steps should be taken at once to suppress profiteering. Parliament should do everything within its power in that direction. This very difficulty in regard to oversea mails is given as one cause for the increased cost of many imported goods sold in Adelaide. Two out of every three vessels from Great Britain, voyaging either by way of the Cape or Suez, now come direct to Melbourne and Sydney. Although Adelaide is on the direct route, they do not touch there. South Australian cargo is carried round to Melbourne or Sydney, and has subsequently to be returned to the South Australian capital. Even before the shipping strike, thousands of tons of overseas cargo intended for Adelaide were carried on to Melbourne or Sydney, and were lying at those ports awaiting return to South Australia. My contention is that all these vessels should touch at Adelaide and discharge their South Australian cargo there. I am informed that the authorities on this side say that they must come direct to Melbourne or Sydney to discharge the troops or whatever they are carrying. This shifting of cargo back to Adelaide must result in increased cost.

Mr. PAGE.—The honorable member knows the reason for the practice. The first consideration is that our boys shall be brought home. You can have your cargo after that is done.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—I think that some vessels carrying troops have discharged cargo at Adelaide. The present arrangement may suit Melbourne and Sydney very well, but it hits South Australia very hard.

Mr. PAGE.—The people of Queensland have to put up with the same sort of thing.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—With the exception of the Blue Funnel liners, the majority of the oversea vessels touching at Queensland ports come direct from the Old Country. Adelaide is on the ordinary trade route of oversea vessels coming to Australia *via* the Cape or Suez, and all such vessels carrying cargo for South Australia should discharge it at Adelaide before coming round to the eastern ports. Under the present system we are giving the profiteers a good excuse for putting up prices. I have no doubt that when we return to normal conditions these troubles will disappear; but, meantime, I ask the Government to see that South Australian traders are no longer subjected to the disabilities of which I have complained.

Although I have criticised the Government this afternoon, I am satisfied with their actions as a whole. I do not say that they have not committed errors of judgment. They are not perfect, and I have no hope of seeing a perfect Government in power. The present Administration and the party behind them are the great bulwarks of the Commonwealth, standing as they do for its stability, security, and prosperity. There are only two parties in power to-day. There is the party that is building and the party that is wasting. The old idea of party politics and divisions is passing away.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The honorable member belongs to the German party.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—No; but the honorable member does, and he is sorry that he is not a German proper. Honorable members opposite advocated peace by negotiation when the policy was first launched from Berlin in 1917, and if they are not German allies I should like to know what other conclusion can be drawn from the English language.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Have we not been negotiating for peace for the last two months?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—There would be a nice lot of negotiations between England and Ireland if the Sinn Feiners had their way. If the Sinn Feiners had England "by the wool," as we have Germany to-day, there would not be much negotiation. The Government, and the party behind them, are the builders, and, of course, we make some mistakes; the party opposite are the wasters. To-day the great industrial army of Australia is split in twain. By what? Two-thirds of our workers are down-right sensible, honest, good industrialists, and a credit to Australia. They believe in arbitration.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—More than two-thirds of them.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—I am stating the proportion of two-thirds because I know the ramifications of the cut-throat red-raggers. They would be dominant to-day but for the fact that they are frightened of the word "scab" being hurled at them. For that reason I support, and will continue to support, the Government, because they are the bulwarks of society, and are the best protection against the attempts that are being made to overthrow it. Honorable members opposite will disclaim the effort to overthrow society. I do not suppose they believe in that policy, but they have been the lackeys of the men outside this Parliament, and they will tumble over themselves in their readiness to do the bidding of their masters.

I am sorry that the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) is not in the Chamber, but I hope that the Assistant Minister (Mr. Wise) will convey to him the suggestion I am about to make. The most serious problem that faces Australia to-day is the maritime strike. I wish the matter to be looked at very calmly, because it is too serious to every portion of the community to be regarded in any other way. I suggest that the Government might advise the Governor-General to call the president of the Ship-owners Federation and the president of the Seamen's Union to a round-table conference.



Mr. WEST.—The Government will not do that.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—I do not know that they have been asked before; I ask them now.

Mr. HIGGS.—Would you recommend that the Governor-General, when he gets the seamen to the conference, should call them "cut-throat red-raggers"?

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—No. My idea in proposing to bring the Governor-General into the dispute is that, at the head of this conference we should have a distinguished representative of the King who enjoys the confidence and respect of all people in Australia. All I desire him to do is to bring the parties together. What objection can there be to that course? The Government say, "There is the Arbitration Court; go to it." And one party replies, "We will not go to the Court." It is of no use to argue with a large body of men who say that they will not do a certain thing. Therefore, it behoves this Parliament of representative men, who are responsible for the peace and good order of the community, to find another way out of the difficulty. I am pledged to the principle of arbitration, but I believe in a round-table conference on the lines of the Whitley Commission in England. That policy will save the industrialists and the world yet. Before it comes, I may have been given 6 feet of earth to sleep in, but the time will surely arrive when the industrialists of England and Australia will realize that, if the parties can only meet to discuss their differences, every dispute can be settled. It may be said that no practical good will result from a round-table conference. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labour, said, "I believe in conciliation by Boards sitting down to discuss their differences, and when a deadlock is reached asking some independent individual to mediate." That policy may be contrary to our arbitration laws, but it is the duty of Parliament and the Government to bring the two parties together. If that were done, I believe that within a very few hours the conference could arrive at a basis upon

which the ships could be manned and the commerce of the community resumed.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—There can be no conference until rebellion ceases.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—What is the use of talking like that? Rebellion means an armed insurrection against the Government. There is no rebellion. But there is chronic dissatisfaction on the part of a large number of sailors with certain conditions of their employment; and, if we cannot get the dispute settled by the direct legal method, let us seek a settlement in some by-way. Are we in such a position that we cannot suggest a settlement of this great trouble other than by following the beaten track? If that is so, the people of Australia are unfortunate in having their hands thus tied.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Atkinson).—The honorable member's time has expired.

*No other honorable member having risen,*

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—With the permission of the Committee, I shall continue my remarks. It has been suggested that the Government might settle the trouble by proclaiming the Navigation Act. I respectfully suggest that this is not the time to raise that matter. The two principal provisions that delayed the proclamation of that Act are the sleeping and eating accommodation on board ships, and the payment of the Australian rate of wages to seamen employed on mail boats when travelling on the Australian coast and competing with the excellent fleets of the Australian Ship-owners Federation. In regard to the first point, the ship-owners promised that all new vessels would be built to conform with the requirements of the Navigation Act, and the Seamen's Union practically accepted that as the means of remedying their grievance. I suggest that we can get the idle ships to sea without troubling about that matter at the present time. The mail steamers will not be in full operation for some time. The wholesale torpedoing of steamers by the enemy means that the fleets for the trade from Europe to Australia are being practically rebuilt; and for the time being we should

confine our efforts to calling the attention of the Ship-owners Federation to the desirability of complying with the provisions of the Navigation Act.

Mr. YATES (Adelaide) [5.3].—I have no desire to prevent the Government getting Supply. When the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) wishes to get a Bill through, he will get it as quickly as he desires. Yesterday we were treated to one of the best exhibitions of solidarity I have ever seen. To-day we have had homilies preached to us by a late member of our party and by the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory). Of course, the slogan of the National Labourites when they first broke away from the Labour party was that they had no desire to be bound by secret juntas. Even the *Argus* now christens the Labour party "the Caucus party"—a designation which, no doubt, is expected to cut some ice at the next election.

Mr. TUDOR.—Our opponents used the same expression at the last election.

Mr. YATES.—They are making it more prominent now. We are accused of being Caucus-ridden, but yesterday Ministerialists gave us an excellent example of party discipline. I do not know whether there are a few red-raggers in the National party, but it would appear that the honorable member for Dampier, at least, will not consent to be leg-roped entirely, whilst the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Archibald) has not quite lost the influence of his association with the Labour party, and feels that he must at times kick over the traces. We have had two contributions to the debate this afternoon from honorable members opposite; but, seeing the times we are passing through, and knowing the sins of commission there have been, to which honorable members opposite have at times referred, it is strange that others have not been plucky enough to criticise the Government as the public expects them to do. Surely they cannot say that they approve of all the Government have done. There are some matters upon which they must hold independent opinions.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Oh, yes!

Mr. YATES.—The honorable member does not approve of many things the present Government have done, but he is Caucus-ridden.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Is he?

Mr. YATES.—Although he dare not express his true opinion of the present Government, he may follow on the lines of the honorable members for Dampier and Hindmarsh, but what about the other section of honorable members opposite, and the move of "law and order," which is to be the slogan at the next general election—Bolshevism *versus* law and order? Honorable members who belonged to our party at one time, and subscribed to all our principles, are now to go to the country on the "law-and-order" stunt. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) realize that they cannot carry the country at the next election if they individually go out in their genuine colours as Liberals or Nationalists, as I may call them, although some call them Labour renegades. The general body of electors will know them for what they are, no matter by what name they call themselves. The Prime Minister knows that he cannot go out with his "gang" and command a majority of the electors, and the Acting Prime Minister, for whom I have a great admiration, because of his outstanding ability, strong man as he is, cannot hope to carry the country with the "crowd" that will follow him. Consequently, there has been a solidification of the numbers for the sake of downing Bolshevism. When the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Archibald) was speaking, the honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) interjected that rebellion must first be settled before the Arbitration Court could be approached. The late members of the Labour party are now a very docile mob. The honorable members for Darwin (Mr. Spence), Boothby (Mr. Story), Herbert (Mr. Bamford), and Denison (Mr. Laird Smith) realize that they cannot get back to the House unless they are now taken into the folds of the Liberal party, which, during the whole of their careers with the Labour party, they have derided as being the Reactionary party.



There are big questions to be dealt with by this Parliament. The honorable member for Hindmarsh pointed out that it is the duty of this House to see that the affairs of the country are kept going in a proper manner; but the responsibility which this House assumes is evidenced by the fact that during nearly the whole of the debate to-day the average attendance of honorable members opposite in the chamber has been about four or five. The honorable member for Hindmarsh says that we can talk Supply as much as we like—from now until doomsday—but we are committed to the expenditure. He says that the expenditure must go on, and that talk on our part will make no difference to the incidence of it. But I wish to refer to a funny suggestion of the honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley), that the Northern Territory should be handed back to South Australia. It is not to the credit of the National Parliament, which has taken over as a national obligation, and for the protection of Australia, what is really the front door of the Commonwealth, that it should be necessary to urge its development. All far-seeing men and patriots should realize, without being urged, that it is necessary to develop the Northern Territory, and make it a secure part of Australia. The National Parliament was quite cognisant of the obligation it took upon itself when it entered into the agreement to take over the Northern Territory, and the mere suggestion that the people of South Australia would not be prepared to take it back as a gift is no justification for neglecting it as it is now being neglected. The honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) is very keen about having a national Capital. I do not think he would be so keen about it if it were to be at Port Augusta; but, nevertheless, he is very keen on establishing the Federal Capital and on the development of the Federal Capital territory, because he realizes that it will give an impetus to the development of the surrounding country. On the other hand, we have the arguments of those who know the Northern Territory, and who have pioneered the outback districts of Aus-

*Mr. Yates.*

tralia, that that territory will be valueless until a railway is built to it from the south. It is the only feasible method of populating it if it is our desire to keep Australia white. When the Territory was handed over there was an agreement that a railway from north to south should be built, and it is only reasonable to ask the Commonwealth to honour its obligations in that direction. No mention of doing so was made by the Acting Prime Minister in his Ministerial statement. The representatives of South Australia have now an opportunity of expressing their opinion of the Government for not having honoured the agreement between the Commonwealth and South Australia, and I hope that before the session closes we shall hear it. I hope that early action will be taken, so that it will insure something being done this session. We have just completed a transcontinental railway, perhaps longer than the one that will be necessary to bridge the gap from north to south. What have the Government done with the material that was used in building it? The live stock must have been disposed of, but what has become of the other material used in such a gigantic undertaking? Has it been left to rust, as some farmers leave their implements to stop gaps in their fences? It cannot be advanced as a reason for delay that Australia is stuck for money. If anyone says that Australia is stuck for money he is camouflaging a lie. If the war had gone on for years we would still have had to raise war loans for the purpose of providing material with which to shoot and kill people. The money is here if the Government choose to use it for the purpose of honouring the promise made to the people of South Australia, and at the same time developing an important part of the continent that cannot be populated until it is linked up with the south by a railway. Australia will not be safe from the menace that is supposed to be at its door until that line is built. South Australian members of the National party have every justification for raising their voices in protest, and, if it be necessary, for removing the Government, if they have the balance of power enabling them to do so. No matter what conditions my Caucus may impose on me, I should follow them in any action taken by them to en-

able South Australia to get its dues in this regard.

I have no desire to make a one-sided State speech, but if Federation is to be maintained in the spirit as well as in the letter it is the duty of Ministers in office to see that no State is unduly handicapped or penalized in regard to public services. The honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Archibald) has referred to the position of South Australia in the matter of overseas mail services. This is not a question in which the ordinary Labour man is concerned, because when his sons or brothers return from the war he seldom gets a letter from England once in fifteen years. I am concerned in this matter, and support the honorable member for Hindmarsh on behalf of the commercial community, and I hope that the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) will see that Adelaide, as a part of the Federation, gets the fair treatment to which it is entitled in the matter of overseas mail.

The honorable member for Hindmarsh has suggested that the Governor-General should be called upon to settle the seamen's strike, but I hope that whatever is done in regard to that dispute he will not be called in to take a hand. I deplore the fact that he has already entered into political affairs in Australia. He came here when there was a grave crisis in this Parliament, and the party in power at that time found him a willing individual who would grant them their request for a double dissolution. Again, I have a keen recollection of that awful scandal, unparalleled in the history of any Parliament or country, by which the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) endeavoured to extend the life of Parliament by inducing a senator to become sick and resign in order to enable another to be appointed in his place in a manner which I have not the least desire to dwell upon. The facts of the case are well known throughout Australia, and condemned by all those who believe in clean politics. Nevertheless, we know what the reason for the intrigue was. There were some, I suppose, who were afraid of an election; at any rate, it suited the Prime Minister of the day to, if possible, extend the life of Parliament. This could be done in the Senate by only suborning or

buying some one there, and apparently a weak member was got to acquiesce. We found the Governor-General in that up to the hilt.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—An honorable member may not, except on a specific motion, discuss any matter in connexion with the Governor-General.

Mr. YATES.—I am merely basing my remarks on the suggestion of the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Archibald) that the Governor-General should be asked to call the heads of the shipping companies, and of the unions, to a round table conference, in order to settle the seamen's dispute. I am merely giving instances in that connexion, and pointing out that at other times the Governor-General has entered into matters political, which, from my point of view, has not been to the credit of the Commonwealth, nor within the ambit of his activities. However, if I am out of order, I shall not refer to these matters. There was another occasion, when I was away at the Front, when the Governor-General entered into matters pertaining to this House in regard to the camouflage, for camouflage it was, surrounding the resignation of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), who went in and out of office like the man in a moving picture. I should have liked to criticise these events, but if that can only be done on a specific motion, I, like others in the community, will have to think more than I say.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Do I understand you to say, Mr. Chanter, that an honorable member may not refer to the Governor-General, except on a specific motion?

The CHAIRMAN.—Not in the tone in which the honorable member was referring to the Governor-General.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Do you think the terms used are objectionable, and, being objectionable, that they may be used on a specific motion?

The CHAIRMAN.—I have given a ruling; does the honorable member rise to dissent from that ruling?

Mr. BRENNAN.—I rise merely with a desire to understand the position. The honorable member for Adelaide (Mr. Yates) was referring to the Governor-General, and I understood you to say



that he ought not to refer to the Governor-General, except on a specific motion. I would like to know whether that was your ruling on the question raised.

The CHAIRMAN.—Up to a certain point I did not intervene when the honorable member for Adelaide (Mr. Yates) was referring to the Governor-General. That honorable member, however, went on to refer to the actions of Ministers, which he said were of a discreditable character, and that the Governor-General was “up to the hilt” in them. That is certainly a reflection on the Governor-General outside the scope of the question before the House. If the honorable member desires to make a charge against the Governor-General, he must do so on a specific motion.

Mr. YATES.—I accept your ruling, Mr. Chanter. I had not intended to refer to the Governor-General, and was merely discussing the suggestion of the honorable member for Hindmarsh (Mr. Archibald) that the Governor-General should be called in as a mediator in an industrial dispute, the conduct of which the Government regard as a challenge to law and order.

The honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) in his remarks this afternoon inferentially and incidentally gave an exhibition of his bitterness in regard to organized labour. That honorable member did not speak outright; but the time will come when he will do so, because he cannot keep those sentiments to himself. As a matter of fact, the majority of honorable members opposite will express similar sentiments at some time during the session. They will refer, I suppose, to the Bolsheviks, and what they have done, and, at the same time, tell us that there is no profiteering, and no reason for the stand taken by the men in the case of the seamen. The honorable member for Dampier said that the first of two essentials was the building up of a national spirit in Australia. My experience at the Front was not long, but there you come into contact with the men of various nations, and one's mind necessarily is expanded. I saw the world as presented in Egypt, France, England, and at the Front; and I can only say that if

there had been no inherited national spirit in the Australian soldiers, born of the conditions under which they live, they would never have put up the splendid record they did. The self-reliance, self-respect, initiative, and resource of the Australian soldier were such that the “Tommy” looked up to him as something far above him; and these are the qualities that make the Australian what he is. If any national spirit is to be fostered and developed in the Australian, it must be by creating better conditions of living and higher ideals; and if that be the desire of the honorable member for Dampier, as it ought to be the desire of every one of us, I am inclined to think that the activities and actions of the Labour party in politics, and in trade unionism generally, will do much more than the policy indicated by the honorable member—of freedom of contract, freedom of trade, and freedom from all restrictions. Such a policy would mean allowing the profiteer to do more than he is doing at present, and would not, to my mind, tend to build up a national spirit in Australia, but, rather, a spirit of subserviency. Official reports in England regarding conscription show, if my memory is right, that some 54 per cent of the men there did not come up to the standard. That could not happen in Australia; if it did, it would not be because of labour conditions, whatever occasions for complaint may exist in certain areas. The honorable member for Dampier does not say outright that all Government restrictions on profiteering and so forth should be relaxed; he does not say, but implies, that there should be no interference with private enterprise, and that we should allow the trading profiteer and the mining man to exploit us at their own sweet will. If that ideal were realized, it would certainly not make for a national Australian spirit.

The next essential of which the honorable member speaks is the stimulation of primary industries. What does he mean by that? He can only mean that we must improve our country from a primary point of view; but it would

appear that we are not to foster our secondary industries, continuing to live from hand to mouth on all the cheap labour countries which care to exploit us. We have been told that Germany in the past was allowed to augment her power at the expense of Great Britain, with the free entry of goods. Even our great Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), at one time a strong advocate of Free Trade, is telling Great Britain not to continue her policy of the past, but to alter her fiscal system so as not to permit Germany again to become a menace to civilized humanity. What other stimulation of trade can the honorable member mean? Evidently he does not desire Government interference; and I take that to mean that he does not desire Wages Boards or the regulation of hours and conditions of labour by the Arbitration Court. God knows that no party more than the Labour party have endeavoured to open up the lands of Australia and have them developed. We have always urged that the best advertisement for immigration is the means we supply for permitting people to develop our lands and make a living here for themselves. What have we done to encourage primary industry, apart from arbitration laws and other concerns of the worker? What does the Wheat Pool or the Wool Pool mean? Do these not mean stimulating industry? The last measure I recollect before departing for the Front was one to provide silos for our wheat. In this regard, the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) made a staggering admission in his speech, and certainly the amount of wheat standing in Australia is stupendous. What is going to be done with it?

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. PAGE (Maranoa) [5.35].—I should like to know what the Government intend to do in connexion with the savage sentences passed by a court martial on men of the *Australia* after their arrival home. If ever there was a diabolical piece of work, it was the sentencing of these men. I wish honorable members to understand that I do not believe in mutiny or revolution of any sort. I

think the men deserve some punishment for what they did. These men, however, have been through all the horrors of war. I remember when the cables came about the Zeebrugge "stunt," and how pleased and gratified patriots opposite were at the part which Australians took on that occasion. But I have not heard a single word of protest from those patriots against the savage sentences imposed on these men. One of them, in particular, was specially mentioned and decorated by the King for services rendered at Zeebrugge. When he came back to Australia, I suppose he got too much grog aboard after being too well-entertained in Fremantle, which was the fault of the people of the western State. He took the law into his own hands, according to the report in the press, and organized what they termed a mutiny. A month's imprisonment would have been quite enough punishment for that man, whom we were glad to call a hero a few months ago, yet, on his return to Australia he is proclaimed a convict. The Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook), or the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce), or whoever has the power of revoking that sentence, should say, "Dismiss the man from the Service and let him go." My God, what a homecoming for his parents who were waiting in Sydney to receive him! After all his faithful service and duty nobly done, when that lad came home—and they are all only lads; the eldest of them is about twenty-three years of age, and they have been away nearly five years—this savage sentence was passed upon him. The court-martial has made convicts of heroes for something which, in civil life, would be punished with about a fortnight in gaol at the most. Let honorable members consider this contrast. Lieutenant-Colonel Howell Price, in Sydney, robbed the Commonwealth of between £70,000 and £80,000. For this he was given from eighteen months to two years' imprisonment. The same sentence is given now to a young man who has nobly carried the banner that honorable members on the other side were proud to wave, yet not one of them has uttered a word of protest. I read in the Sydney press that the honorable member for Nepean (Mr.



Orchard) appeared at the court martial to defend the brothers Rudd. If what he did represents his idea of defence, God help them! He knows the whole of the facts, and was present during the whole of the trial, but I have not heard that he has done anything whatever to get the sentences reduced. It behoves this Parliament to take up the cudgels on behalf of these men, and to see that the punishment is reduced, at any rate. What inducement does this incident offer to any young Australian to join the Navy? If any young man asks me my advice about joining His Majesty's Navy upon the Australian station, I will refer him to the savage sentences passed on the men who misconducted themselves on board the *Australia* at Fremantle.

Dr. MALONEY.—Some of them were innocent, too.

Mr. PAGE.—I do not think they were innocent, because they pleaded guilty.

Mr. RILEY.—That was on the advice of their advocate.

Mr. PAGE.—If I were innocent of a crime no advocate in the world would make me plead guilty. Something should be done, and done quickly, in this matter. Let honorable members who have sons growing to maturity, picture what their feelings would be, after reading in the *London Gazette* how a son of theirs had been decorated by the King for bravery—and that attack on Zeebrugge will live for ever in British history—if the boy misconducted himself on the way out, and when they went to meet him, they found him in irons, and saw him taken into custody on Garden Island. I feel for the relatives of these boys, who have been handed over to the tender mercies of Naval officers. Is this all they are to expect from a grateful country—two years' imprisonment and ignominious dismissal from His Majesty's Forces? Honorable members will remember that some soldiers, tried for alleged mutiny in the Defence Forces, received only a few months' imprisonment. They were not ignominiously dismissed from the Service, while none of the soldiers who took possession of Sydney was punished. The Defence authorities were glad to get them out of khaki as

quickly as possible and smother the matter up. Every man who fought at Zeebrugge, and every man who has been fighting for his country on board ship, deserves all the credit that it is possible for us in Australia to give him. If the Government will not do something towards letting these men out, or reducing their sentences, it will have the same effect on the party opposite at the next election as Wade's action had in New South Wales, when he dragged Peter Bowling through the streets manacled and shackled as a convict. The sentences should have been reduced, or something should have been done, ere this.

Mr. BRENNAN.—It will be done.

Mr. PAGE.—The Government will have to be quick about it, or the smell will be there just the same. It was one of the most savage sentences that ever I read of in my life.

Mr. ATKINSON.—The Acting Prime Minister says that the matter is in the Admiralty's hands.

Mr. PAGE.—Knowing the Acting Prime Minister as I do, I know that he has a warm, sympathetic corner in his heart for any man who has gone overseas to fight for his country, and I was surprised that he had not taken action ere this.

Mr. RILEY.—He said there was no appeal from the sentences.

Mr. PAGE.—The Government is supreme. I was talking to a Naval officer in Sydney, and he said the crime was intensified because the men were on active service. Fancy that, and in home waters! The *Australia* had done her war service, and Fremantle was her first Australian port of call. The hospitality of the people of Fremantle and Perth was to blame, and not the sailors. It would have been quite enough to keep them in prison until they landed in Sydney, and then let them go free.

Mr. FENTON.—Has not the Acting Prime Minister power to make a suggestion in a matter of this sort?

Mr. PAGE.—The Government are all-powerful, and one word from them would open that prison door to-night. Something should be done to release these young men at the earliest possible

moment. What a home coming it is for these boys, returning after faithfully serving their country! Is this the way to popularize the Australian Navy? Is this the gratitude Australia has for her sons returning after doing nobly by their country?

Mr. RILEY.—It is not Australia, it is the imported officers that passed the sentences.

Mr. PAGE.—Those officers are in the pay of the Australian Government. The least we can do is to let these men out after their five years of active service. Is it not enough ignominy to dismiss them from the Service? I do not want honorable members to think that I am condoning their offence, because it was one of the most serious offences that can be committed on board ship—especially a war-ship—but, taking all the circumstances into consideration, if I had the power I would release the men to-morrow, and dismiss them from the Service.

Mr. RILEY.—It was not a mutiny in front of the enemy, but in front of their friends.

Mr. PAGE.—If they had mufined in the face of the enemy, it would have meant shooting.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Cannot you ask the Acting Prime Minister, now that Peace is about to be declared, to make representations to the Admiralty to treat these men leniently?

Mr. PAGE.—The question put by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) to the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) related to the possibility of an appeal from the decision of the court martial; but I am not asking for any appeal. I am asking the Government to act. The men pleaded guilty, and have been sentenced. There is no appeal from that. They threw themselves on the mercy of the Court, and their mercy was two years' gaol for a man who wore the distinguished conduct medal, and fought at the battle of Zeebrugge. That was the clemency of the Court—two years' gaol and ignominious dismissal from His Majesty's service. What more could they do to a man, unless they hanged him? That man will carry the brand of this sentence for the rest of his life. He is

languishing in a prison to-day. If the people felt as I do, they would tear down the prison walls. I think the sentence was savage and brutal. I cannot find words to express the horror with which I read of it. The men certainly should have been punished, but not in the savage way in which punishment has been meted out to them. It is a very easy matter for Naval officers, seated at dinner, with their feet under the mahogany, to say, "This sort of thing is an awful crime and must be suppressed"; but in passing such a sentence they are destroying the Australian Navy.

Mr. BAMFORD.—It is too much like victimization.

Mr. PAGE.—I do not think it is, and I fail to understand how the honorable member can apply the term, because these men never "ratted," and the honorable member did.

Mr. BAMFORD.—I did not. I was expelled and victimized.

Mr. PAGE.—The answer given by the Acting Prime Minister to the question which the Leader of the Opposition addressed to him as to the right of appeal from the sentence of the court martial was—

There is no appeal to any higher Court from the sentence of a Naval court martial. Higher authority has, however, the right to review the sentence. In this case, the higher authority is the Admiralty, inasmuch as the ships are still under Admiralty control under the terms of a proclamation issued by the Governor-General, dated 10th August, 1914, transferring the vessels of the Commonwealth Naval Forces and all officers and seamen of those vessels to the King's Naval Forces. The proclamation provided that such transfer should continue until the issue of a proclamation declaring that war no longer existed. The Acting Minister for the Navy is at present in New South Wales, and on his return I will confer with him on the matter.

If we have no control over our own ships while they are in Australian waters, what does the Acting Prime Minister mean by his promise to confer with the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton)?

Mr. ATKINSON.—To confer with him as to making representations.

Mr. PAGE.—Then the sooner we go to the country the better. This is one of the questions on which we shall fight the next election. If the Labour party is



returned to power, then within twenty-four hours of our taking possession of the Treasury bench these men will be released.

Mr. WEBSTER.—The honorable member is assuming that the Labour party will be returned.

Mr. PAGE.—We shall do so whether the Admiralty has anything to do with the matter or not. I make this declaration in the name of our party, and take full responsibility for it. I know enough of the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) to be convinced that if he had the power to release these men they would not remain in prison for twenty-four hours.

I am glad that the honorable member for Nepean (Mr. Orchard) is now present, since I have mentioned his name in connexion with the passing of these savage sentences. According to the press, the honorable member attended the Naval court martial as the friend of these men. What has he done since then to secure their release from gaol, or at least a reduction of their sentences?

Mr. ORCHARD.—I shall follow the honorable member.

Mr. PAGE.—The honorable member will have a chance to explain. I have been in Sydney during the last ten days, and have heard, not only supporters of the Labour party, but business and professional men say that clemency should be extended to the men.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Surely everybody says that!

Mr. PAGE.—Then everybody should take action to secure the release of the men.

Mr. ATKINSON.—The Acting Prime Minister said he would confer with the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton).

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—He also said that the Commonwealth Government had nothing to do with the case. The honorable member, as an old English "Tommy," ought to know what that means.

Mr. PAGE.—If we have nothing to do with our own Navy, then in the name of heaven who has? We pay for its upkeep, for its manning, and everything else, and

yet we have nothing to do with its control.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—It was under the control of the Admiralty at the time. Be fair.

Mr. PAGE.—I do not wish to be unfair. My sole concern is for the relatives of these men.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Think of the men, not so much of the relatives.

Mr. MAXWELL.—Surely the men must be considered.

Mr. PAGE.—I am thinking of their relatives. What would a young man care about a sentence of two years' imprisonment for such an offence as this? I should not have cared if I had been sent to gaol in connexion with the shearers strike of 1891, but my wife and family would have been much concerned. Let me tell the honorable member for Fawcner (Mr. Maxwell) that I am not trying to condone the offence committed by these men. They committed an offence against discipline, but the sentence imposed on them is a savage one.

Mr. BAMFORD.—We all admit that.

Mr. PAGE.—Then we should do something to secure a reduction of it.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Every one is willing to do all that is possible in the matter.

Mr. PAGE.—That may be so; but the men are still in gaol. We have talked about our heroes, and what they have done for Australia. Surely we are not hypocrites. I believe there are some true men in Parliament, and there ought to be some consideration for a man who volunteered to take part in the Zeebrugge "stunt."

Mr. MAXWELL.—I would forgive almost anything that such a man did.

Mr. PAGE.—So would I. I would say to such a man, "Your grateful country can extend clemency to you. Even if these Naval 'Johnnies' have passed sentence upon you, a grateful country can overlook your offence." I do not say these men did right. They committed a very serious breach of discipline; but why should we act like savages in meting out punishment to them. From my knowledge of the Acting Prime Minister, I had anticipated that long before this he

would have used his influence and position to at least secure a reduction of the sentences.

Mr. BAMFORD.—I have reason to believe that he has.

Mr. RILEY.—He had an opportunity to say so this afternoon, but he did not avail himself of it.

Mr. PAGE.—I can well understand that he does not wish to supersede the Acting Minister for the Navy.

Mr. FENTON.—Even so, the telegraph lines are open to him.

Mr. PAGE.—There are some matters that cannot be dealt with by telegraph.

Mr. FENTON.—But this sentence is "killing" the Australian Navy.

Mr. PAGE.—That is so. I ask the honorable member for Fawkes (Mr. Maxwell) what sort of an advertisement this sentence will be for recruiting for the Australian Navy. I think the Navy is to be congratulated on what it has done. These men volunteered to fight for the Empire, and "did their bit" in policing the North Sea and the West Indies. I was astounded when I saw the map recently published in a Melbourne newspaper showing the seas traversed by the *Australia* during the war. On board a man-o'-war there is no back door by which to escape. There is little chance of a wounded man being picked up when his vessel goes down in a big Naval engagement. We know what awful casualties have taken place in such circumstances. Our boys knew of these things when, in 1914, they volunteered for the Navy and risked their lives for their country. When they came back and "kicked over the traces," as young Australians will always do, we could have well afforded to be generous in our treatment of them. The spirit that led these young men to "play up" is the spirit that has made the Australian nation of to-day, and if we are not hypocrites the least we can do is to persevere in our efforts to secure a reduction of their sentences. Let every honorable member take action. Honorable members opposite all say that they think the sentences are savage, and if we all put our shoulders to the wheel these young men should not remain in gaol much longer.—

Mr. ORCHARD (Nepean) [6.0].—Since the honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. Page) has introduced my name into this discussion I think it only right that I should explain my connexion with the lads at the recent court martial. Mr. Conington, an old friend of a family of which two of these lads are members, and who is well known to the Labour movement, asked me to appear at the trial as the friend of the boys. I went on board the *Australia* to ascertain exactly what were the privileges or functions of a "friend" in such circumstances, and found that a Naval court martial in this respect was different altogether from a Military court martial. The man who appears as a friend of a person accused before a Naval court martial is not allowed to address the Court on his behalf. He can ask questions only by permission of the President of the Court, and that permission may be withheld, I take it, at any part of the proceedings. His efforts, consequently, are very restricted.

Mr. BRENNAN.—What a lovely machine this Democracy has erected!

Mr. ORCHARD.—It is framed on the old British system. On leaving the *Australia*, I went to the Naval prison, at Garden Island, where I saw Mr. Rudd, the father of two of the boys. One of his boys is a Zeebrugge hero, has the distinguished conduct medal, and, although only twenty-three years of age, has six years' service to his credit, while the other is twenty years of age. I also saw a number of relatives of the other accused men. The relatives were trying to persuade the lads to plead guilty. A couple of the boys, however, to use their own words, felt that they would "like to have a flutter," because the maximum sentence for the offence was two years. Upon the advice of Mr. Rudd his two boys decided to plead guilty and to throw themselves upon the mercy of the Court.

Mr. HIGGS.—And they might not have been guilty.

Mr. ORCHARD.—I do not wish to go into that phase of the matter. Before the five boys decided to plead guilty, I went through their records. To the civilian mind some of the offences against their names might appear to be bad, but when I said to the Judge Advocate, "I



take it these are trivial offences, inseparable from a calling such as the Navy," he replied, "Yes; we do not look upon them as being in any way serious." One lad had "desertion" marked against his name. When I probed the matter, however, I found that the lad had got tired of patrolling the North Seas in the *Australia*, and that when the London metropolitan police found him he had enlisted and was actually on his way to France. That cannot be regarded as any crime on the part of the lad; rather did it show his spirit. From my short acquaintance of the rules of the Navy, I am quite convinced that drastic changes will require to be made if the Australian Navy is to be popular. On the night preceding the trial, Mr. Connington and I prepared a statement by the boys. We were not allowed by Naval rules to speak for the boys at the trial, but we were allowed to read a statement on their behalf. They pleaded guilty, and I confess that the sentences passed upon them came as a big shock to me. I saw the lads immediately afterwards, and they took their fate quite light-heartedly. They were not affected as their relatives and I were. I promised I would make representations to the Government immediately in the hope that some substantial reduction of the sentences would be made. The Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton) being in Sydney, I saw him at once, and said, "Two of these lads have received the maximum sentence. If it was the intention of the court martial to record a sentence that would deter other men from committing the same offence, very good; but if they are to serve the full term, I consider that the sentence is too great for the offence." He promised to look into the matter. Last evening I was closeted with the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) who promised to investigate these cases immediately the Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton) returned to Melbourne. I remind honorable members that no departmental wheels move more slowly than those in the Naval and Military Departments. But even the verdict of a civil court cannot be upset a day after it is recorded; a certain procedure must be followed. I was very much impressed with the statement of

Mr. Orchard.

Lieutenant Bowyer-Smith, who was called to give evidence for the youngest boy. He pointed out that when the lad was only a little over fifteen years old, he had the misfortune to witness a similar disturbance on the *Psyche*, and later he was on an English ship when trouble of this kind occurred. He had never had the Naval rules read to him; he is only eighteen years of age now. All the boys are of a very fine type. I have already represented to the Acting Minister for the Navy and the Acting Prime Minister that one of the Rudd boys is in a most unfortunate position. He married an English widow with one child, and she died in giving birth to a child of which Rudd is the father. His principal concern now is as to whether the allotment money which was being paid for the children in England will continue to be paid while he is serving his sentence. There are circumstances surrounding this case that tear at a man's heartstrings. I assure the Committee that everything that can possibly be done by me as a friend of the boys, although I had not known them previously, will be done to induce the Government to reduce the sentences of the court martial.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [6.11].—I had hoped that this question would be dealt with exhaustively at a later stage, but as it has been raised to-day, it is well that we should understand where we are. I do not wish to discuss at length the discipline of the Army and Navy, but I do know that the Australian will not make a good garrison soldier or a sailor in peace time under the conditions that exist in the British Army and Navy. I was reared in the Army, and I know what the conditions are. After the landing at Gallipoli, a sergeant of police in my electorate said, "Some people said the Australian boys would not fight. I knew they would fight if they had the chance, because they used to fight me when they had no chance." Time after time, the Australian young man has been condemned by globe trotters as only fit to smoke a cigarette or lean against a lamp-post. Some of our own citizens took the same view, based, no doubt, on the knowledge that

the Australian boy will not become a soldier or sailor under the conditions that are accepted by Britishers. It is of interest to remember the fact in connexion with the trouble on the *Australia*. The vessel was returning home after an absence of over four years, and on arriving at Fremantle the men were landed and fêted by the citizens. They were given a glorious reception, and they thought they would return the hospitality which had been extended to them by inviting their friends to visit the ship on the Sunday. To their surprise, they found the vessel was to leave on the Sunday instead of on the following day. I undertake to say that if the officers had arranged to entertain their friends on the Sunday, the vessel would not have left on that day. That is my experience, at any rate.

MR. PAGE.—But the officers were in command of the boat.

MR. MATHEWS.—I admit that. We have had considerable trouble, and it is particularly evident in my own electorate, in getting men to remain in the Australian Navy. We have raised the rate of pay, and the present Acting Minister for the Navy (Mr. Poynton) has endeavoured to make the seafaring life more attractive to Australians. It will require to be made enticing, and the old order of things must pass before Australians will accept Naval service. In the Navigation Act we made provision for the treatment of boys on ships; but those clauses will be inoperative because Australian boys will not take to a seafaring life. In the mercantile marine, the captain of a ship has the power to treat his crew under certain conditions as he jolly well likes. Australian boys will not submit to that treatment, hence the difficulty of getting them to enter the mercantile marine. How much more reluctant will they be to serve in the Navy, which is modelled upon the conditions of the British Service. From the days of the mutiny of the *Nore* down to the present time, mutineers in the Navy have been hanged; and if there be punishment after death the men who ordered those hangings will surely suffer damnation. The sailors at the *Nore* struck because they were working under impossible conditions; but they were told that they

must accept them because they were serving in the British Navy. That is the spirit of the Navy. I am hopeful that we shall not require a big Navy in Australia; but if we do, the present system will require to be altered. I hear references to the British Admiralty. Are we to subject the men of Australia to control by the British Admiralty, which is composed of men trained in the horrors of the Naval system, and who wish to see excessive punishment for all crimes on ships—crimes that would not take place on land at all? The trouble at Fremantle would never have happened in the face of the enemy. If the men had been mutinous before the enemy, I could understand the severity of the sentences; but they were merely returning to their homes after long absence, and were participating in the welcome jubilations. If Australia is to have an Army and a Navy, we must wipe out the conditions of the old officer caste, which teaches those in authority to look upon the lower ratings as dirt. Even Australian military officers, who have been reared in our midst, and know the traditions and spirit of this country, have imbibed the caste traditions of the British Army, and are inclined to mete out the same sort of punishment. I say, again, that we cannot rule Australians according to the discipline of the British Navy.

MR. RILEY.—I hope we shall not try to do so.

MR. MATHEWS.—If we do, we shall make a mistake. I recognise that many members on the Government side feel just as sympathetically in this matter as we do. We can understand the feeling of the honorable member for Nepean (Mr. Orchard). It is becoming very apparent that this kind of treatment will not be accepted in Australia, and the Government should realize that the sooner we get away from control by the British Admiralty the better it will be. The ideal of the British Navy is to keep the lower ratings under such strong control that they are deprived of their manhood. We have heard much of the encomiums passed upon the Australians for their conduct in France and Gallipoli. In fact, they have been such as to belittle the efforts of others who were fighting



during the war, although I know that the stock which produced the Australians has, in the past, fought and died as Australians have fought and died. It has been said over and over again that the very fact that our men were willing to accept circumstances as they met them, in spite of what might happen to them, made them such good soldiers, and if now we endeavour to prevent that feeling from growing in Australians we shall do harm. It is true, as the honorable member for Nepean has said, that a court martial could not move quickly; but the same remark applies to civil Courts. We have had handed down to us from our forefathers the dictum that the law can do no harm, and that when once a man is sentenced, time must elapse before the decision can be upset. Not only have Judges laid this down, but it is a principle that has been instilled in the Navy, that although a mistake is made, it is better that the men should suffer any penalty than that the British Navy should have a stain upon its escutcheon. It will not hold good in Australia. We say that it is better for the guilty to escape than for the innocent to suffer. What is the crime that these men have committed? I do not agree with the honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. Page) that it was a terrible crime. The gentlemen who control the mercantile marine of Australia regret that they cannot handle the seamen on strike as the men on the *Australia* were handled. In our so-called civilization, those who control others want to maintain such a hold over them that they can have them body and soul, and make them do what they wish them to do. And that is the spirit which permeates the Navy. Only within the last few years have we been able to get rid of it in our mercantile marine. Australians will not work under those conditions. In spite of the bait which is offered, men whom I know will not sign on again in the Navy. The soldier gets a chance; but the man on board a ship is so circumscribed that he has but few opportunities for relaxation, and when he gets on shore he hardly knows what to do. Others have to take him in hand. Some

treat him well. Others rob him. The people of Fremantle treated the men of the *Australia* well, and when the men who were coming back to their own country found that the vessel was about to leave that port, they took certain action. It is admitted that no violence was used.

Mr. YATES.—If they had used violence they might have escaped. The two men who used violence in the matter with which I was concerned got off without punishment.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The men who tried the fellows must have been idiots, such as those who tried Gunner Yates. I have seen dozens of courts martial, and know how they are conducted. The honorable member for Nepean has spoken about the defence of these men. In military courts martial the man on trial is supposed to be able to appoint a friend, but when that friend is endeavouring to make a point, it is not unusual to hear the President of the Court cry, "Silence! Silence!" The friend is not allowed to put the prisoner's case. He is shut up at once if he endeavours to do so. When a sentence is being imposed, there is a lot of rigmarole. The President says, "In this Court of His Majesty you have had an opportunity of proving your innocence." These men had no opportunity of doing so. The trial was a farce.

Mr. ORCHARD.—I thought things were going well until the sentences were imposed.

Mr. MATHEWS.—We have much to complain of in our civil Courts. A lawyer is allowed a certain licence, which he exercises. He is not afraid to tell a Judge or a magistrate that he is doing wrong. On the other hand, if I attempt to defend myself, I am jumped on by the Judge or magistrate, and treated with contempt. I am not allowed to defend myself as a lawyer could defend me. That happens in civil Courts, but in military tribunals a man has very little chance of doing so, while in the Navy—

Mr. ORCHARD.—He has no chance at all.

Mr. MATHEWS.—He has not. The Naval and Military caste must disappear

from Australia. It is permeating our Defence system. The war has instilled into the minds of many of our Australian officers who went abroad a strong feeling that they are nothing but subordinate parts of an army. They have been bitten by the Military caste.

*Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 7.45 p.m.*

Mr. MATHEWS.—Prior to the adjournment for dinner I was pointing out that this Naval and Military caste that we have built up on lines handed down to us would have to go, and drawing the attention of the people of Australia to the treatment that has been meted out to men who have risked their lives in the defence of this country. These men have been subjected to treatment that could not possibly befall them in civil life. My principal objection, however, is to the different treatment given to commissioned officers from that given to the lower-paid ranks of the Army and Navy. Just take the case of Captain Glossop, the commander of the *Sydney*—

Mr. RILEY.—He was chairman of the court martial.

Mr. MATHEWS.—If so, he is a bright object to be chairman of a court martial, after his own misdemeanour. If a subordinate officer in the Navy had committed such a grave blunder as he did on the *Sydney*, in his attack on the *Emden*, he would have been shot. The way in which Captain Glossop handled the *Sydney* was a disgrace. He had a superior ship, and superior guns, both in range and calibre, but he muddled things up so much that the vessel was knocked about and nearly torpedoed, and there was great loss of life. It is current knowledge that if he had handled his ship properly, nothing of the sort would have happened; but, instead of punishment, he was given a nice soft job at a good salary.

Mr. ATKINSON.—He was disgraced, was he not?

Mr. MATHEWS.—He got a nice job at a good salary, I know that much. It is occurrences of this sort that not only disappoint, but dishearten people, when they see the punishments inflicted on unfortunates in the lower ranks. I do not wish to be hard on the officers, but if severe punishment is necessary for the lower ranks in the interests of discipline,

the same rule ought to apply to the higher-paid officers. In our own Army, for instance, they heap honours on men who are guilty of heinous crimes. I will give you an instance. There is Brigadier-General McCay, and, as a native of this State, with a little provincialism about me, I am sorry to say he is a Victorian. When in charge of a brigade in Egypt, he conceived the idea that he would do something, and, in the heat of the summer, he took a brigade a long-forced march with only the water in their water-bottles. This is an incident of which every returned soldier speaks, and the newspapers were full of it at the time. He ought to have had the necessary knowledge, or he was not fit for his position; but, as it turned out, owing to a lack of water, men suffered and died; indeed, if it had not been for the fact that a New Zealand brigade was following up behind, thousands of men would have been lost.

Mr. RILEY.—Numbers were lost as it was.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Of course; hundreds were sent back with damaged hearts and broken constitutions, and all through the blundering of a man on whom honours were heaped afterwards. I do not know that Brigadier-General McCay, when he returned, was received with open arms or with any great flourish of trumpets, but he was knighted, received promotion, and went to Europe. We have heard of other mistakes, but this is one incident in his career as a General in command; and he ought to have been disgraced at once. When men are thus honoured, instead of being punished, is it any wonder that there is much high feeling, together with disgust and contempt, amongst the people of Australia because of the punishments meted out to the young fellows on the *Australia*? No nation can live in which such events are possible, and no Government ought to be able to live which allows anything of the kind to take place. I know I shall be accused of trying to create class hatred in the community; but the class difference is here now, and it ought to be exposed. If the Government do not do something within the next few days, I trust a test question will be put to the House, so that we may see which members are on the side of humanity and justice, and which



in favour of bolstering up anything done by the Naval and Military caste, which, unfortunately, we have allowed to grow up in our midst in the course of the war. To-day I received a letter from a woman, a relation of one of the men, and it is truly heart-breaking to read it. She had a son at the Front of whom she was proud; she knew all his weaknesses, and was quite prepared to admit them; but she tells of a terrible punishment that has been inflicted on him. She also knows that similar punishment was not meted out to others who deserve it. Wherever officers are the cause of the trouble, and men have to be punished for the purposes of discipline, the officers responsible, ought also to be punished. Gunner Yates, the honorable member for Adelaide, was found guilty of an offence, and sentenced to sixty days' detention. He was recommended to mercy, because the offence arose through somebody else's fault; but, all the same, those at fault have never been dealt with.

Mr. YATES.—Yet, instead of listening to a memorial with 700 signatures, the authorities lined the beach with men armed with live ammunition. We were to have got lead. Honorable members do not know that.

Mr. MATHEWS.—In his evidence on oath, the health officer said that, although the ship had been in port for six days, and complaints had been made by the men, it was not until 7.30 in the evening that he heard of any trouble on the ship. The men were without soap for five days, and were reduced to pressing their clothing to get rid of the lice; yet no man in authority was punished for this. Gunner Yates, however, got sixty days, and the other criminal got thirty days.

Mr. YATES.—And he admitted doing worse than I did.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I should like honorable members to see this other criminal. He is a man about fifty years of age, with an innocent looking face, iron-grey hair, and spectacles. From the time he left Australia his duty had been to look after the comforts and requirements of the men, and because he devoted himself to

this duty, and spoke about the inattention of the officers, he was sentenced to thirty days. If the health authorities had not had the trouble pointed out to them, that silly, damned old fool, Antill, who was Commandant over there—

The CHAIRMAN.—Order!

Mr. MATHEWS.—Well, I will call him a jolly old fool. He, apparently, did not interest himself at all in the matter; indeed, I cannot say whether he did know anything about it. These men, who had been fighting on the front lines, were kept under such circumstances for six days, and no one in authority was punished. As I said before, if men are to be punished for dereliction of duty, with a view to maintaining discipline, then those others who bring about the trouble ought to be punished ten-fold. Unless we get something direct from the Government within the next week in regard to the so-called mutiny on the *Australia*, I hope honorable members will have an opportunity of showing how they stand in the matter.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH (Denison) [7.56].

—I should like to say a few words in reference to the speech made last night by the honorable member for Ballarat (Mr. McGrath), a speech which must have not only interested, but greatly impressed, every member of the House. That honorable gentleman referred most feelingly, and, I hope, effectively, to the treatment of our men in France and in other places, and I should now like to intimate to him that, personally, I shall be glad to give him reasonable assistance in the excellent work that he has evidently set himself out to do. I venture to say that every member on both sides of the House will give a sympathetic ear to all such cases. The honorable member, in my opinion, was very temperate in his remarks, and with him I now appeal to the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt), with his practical master-mind, to heed what has been said, and when Peace has been established, we hope, for many years to come, to extend clemency to these men, and have them released. The honorable member for Ballarat told us of boys of seventeen who have fought for this

country as no other men have fought in any other part of the world. They may have gone a little astray, but what can we expect from youths of such an age? They may at a most critical time have failed in their duty; but I hope that serious consideration will be given to all such cases, and that sentences will be considerably reduced, and as many men as possible released. I say, "as many as possible," because I hold that we must maintain discipline in all walks of life. There is only one way in which to maintain discipline, and it may appear to be hard at times; and, as I say, I hope that clemency will be extended.

We are all anxious to see that our returned men shall be kept from becoming unemployable. We did not have such men in Australia before the war, and I hope we shall not have them now. By "unemployable" I mean men similar to those I saw on the Thames Embankment on two nights during my visit to England. These were men who, if given work, could not possibly perform it. They had become unemployable. Any man who is kept out of occupation, who cannot get work for a long time, who does not work when he gets it, or who does not try to do his best when he is working, will become dwarfed in intellect, and cannot be a good citizen. Consequently, I am anxious to see provision made to find occupation for these men when they come back, after they have had a fair and reasonable rest, and to train them in the way they should go. There is in the Queen's Hall a practical illustration of what may be done. I had an opportunity this evening of doing something that I have not done for the last ten years—working a telegraph key. I could send messages just as well on that key in the Queen's Hall as on any key I used when operating in the electrical department. The work is excellent. I understand it has been done by men who have only been recently trained.

Mr. TUDOR.—Practically all crippled soldiers.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I believe most of them have returned from the Front maimed in some way, and are undergoing vocational training. There are splendid telegraph relays there. The winding

seems good, and the connecting up splendid, and those relays are a credit to the men who have done the work. This clearly demonstrates to us that the master mind is in those men when at peaceful occupations as well as at war. The results are creditable, not only to the men themselves, but to the Department of Repatriation.

I do not propose to criticise the Department unless I can make practical suggestions for improvement. Any one can find fault in any Department or private institution in the world. No man at the head of an institution will claim that it is being perfectly run, although it is easier to carry on a private concern where you have men with years of training than a new Government Department like this one is. To judge by his appearance, the Minister in charge of it is already broken in health; but he is doing his best, and the sooner we try to do something to help him, the better for us and for all concerned. We have the right to criticise and complain here; but do not let us abuse that right, or the protection we enjoy as members of Parliament. When we criticise, let us make suggestions for improvement. I offer this suggestion: I hope that before long the Minister will see his way clear to decentralize, to take some of the work away from Melbourne. I would throw more work on to the Returned Soldiers Association. I would select men from that Association, put them on the local Boards, pay them well for their services, and then throw the responsibility on to them.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—But they are on the local Boards.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—But is the system working as it should? I am told that everything has to be submitted to Melbourne. If a local Board had more power, it would be able to give effect to the views of its members as practical men, things would work much more smoothly, and the Minister and those immediately surrounding him would be relieved of many of their present arduous duties. Instead of the bitter criticism that goes on now, the Minister would be able to say, "But you are responsible; I gave you certain authority; you have the right to exercise certain powers;



what have you done?" In that way, the responsibility would be thrown on to certain persons, and it is remarkable what a difference this makes. When a man gets into the chair, he finds he cannot do so easily what he would like to do.

The honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) spoke to-day of the Navigation Act. I do not know why it has not been proclaimed, although I have my ideas on the subject.

Mr. TUDOR.—The British Government asked that it should not be proclaimed.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I do not know the reason, but the world is getting so small that no one country can legislate now unto itself. We have gradually been born into nationhood, and we have to take on ourselves a nation's responsibilities. At one time, I could not understand why one gentleman in my electorate always voted for me. He was wealthy, and, by all appearances, I thought he should be totally opposed to me in politics. When I asked him the reason, he said: "I am a Canadian, and I vote for you because you are out to control transport. The power that controls transport controls the people body and soul. I am going to vote for you because I have suffered from the private control of transport in Canada." I said, "Are you not afraid of our going too far?" "No," he replied; "immediately you go too far, you will have the guns of another nation on to you."

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Did he refer to sea or land transport? Canada has no reason to complain of her land transport.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Both sea and land, I believe. I think the reason the Navigation Act has not been proclaimed is that it may interfere greatly with the commerce of other nations.

Mr. TUDOR.—No.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—Whatever be the reason, I hope the day is not far distant when effect will be given to it, because the best brains available in Australia were put into its preparation, and it should consequently be a very good Act.

The interjection of the honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Foster) brings me to the important question of shipping. I

am very pleased to find so many converts to the control of sea transport as well as land transport by the State. Years ago I advocated this, and to-day you will hardly find any great body of men in Australia opposed to it. At the recent Tasmanian elections, there was scarcely any difference between the platforms of the two parties on the question. Both advocated State-owned steamers, and the Premier of Tasmania is in power to-day largely owing to this idea, which at one time was sneeringly referred to as Socialistic. The position in Tasmania to-day is this: There is a great dearth of shipping; we have not been able to get sufficient tonnage either to take away the foodstuffs that are waiting there for transport over the sea, or to connect the State with the mainland. We are also suffering from the withdrawal of the Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company, whose boats now take the western route through the Panama Canal to New Zealand, instead of coming the other way round, and making Hobart a port of call. I do not think it is the opening of the Panama Canal that is responsible. A most extraordinary thing has happened. Before the Commonwealth took control of the lighthouses, a 7,000-ton boat had to pay £25 to the State in light dues to enter the port of Hobart. To-day it costs £145 16s. 8d., or an increase of £120. Surely this extra expense cannot be due to the additional lights that have been put on our coast. We have had, I think, only one or two new ones.

Mr. TUDOR.—There have been twenty or thirty new lights for the whole of Australia. You cannot differentiate between States under the Constitution.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—The honorable member refers to the whole of Australia. I was speaking of the coast of Tasmania. Cannot the Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Greene) do something to remedy this grievance, which is a very serious matter for us? The ships will not call at our port, because the cargo they take up is not of very great extent, and they would rather run past than call in with the light dues so high. The suggestion of the Master Warden is that the rate should be reduced to 4d. per ton, or a

maximum charge of £75 per vessel. Even that would be a big increase over the cost under State control, but the reduction on present charges would help us materially. I believe the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) promised, when he was Minister for Trade and Customs, that something would be done if it could be shown that vessels were not entering our ports on account of these charges. We suffer also because we have no direct communication with the Old World. Of our imports, 76.3 per cent. come from or through other States; 17.76 per cent. come from the United Kingdom direct; 1.8 per cent. from other British possessions; and 4.06 per cent. from foreign countries. Of our exports, 87.71 per cent. go to or through the other States; 8.5 per cent. to the United Kingdom direct; 1.35 per cent. to other British Possessions; and 2.43 per cent. of foreign countries. Here I should like to compliment the shipping correspondent of the *Hobart Mercury* upon a number of shipping articles which he has written, and which I commend to the perusal of Ministers and members of this House, who may desire to do Tasmania justice in this matter. He has put the figures I have quoted in another way when he says that no less than £2,271,000 worth of goods passed through the other States in the form of transshipments, and the value of the whole of the import and export trade of Tasmania was estimated in 1913 at £8,675,000. We desire that that trade should grow, and the only way in which that can be brought about, and we can produce the wealth so much needed at the present time, is by giving our producers facilities to get their produce to market. I had some experience of their difficulties this year in trying to secure shipping transport for blue peas. With the honorable members for Darwin (Mr. Spence), Wilmot (Mr. Atkinson), Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), and other Tasmanian members, I tried to get the blue-pea crop away, because it meant so much to a certain portion of Tasmania. Had we been left alone things would have been better than they were, but every one seemed to desire to have a finger in the pie, and so

many telegrams on the subject were sent to merchants in England that they thought that we had 10,000,000 tons, instead of 10,000 tons of blue peas to get away, and they offered no reasonable price at all. One grower had 100 bags on the wharf, and, so far as I know, they are there yet. He had fifty bags in his barn, and was offered 5s. per bushel for them by a man at Burnie. In this connexion farmers' representatives might learn something from what has taken place. We know that many farmers have said that they did not want the Wheat Pool, and that if left alone they could sell their wheat to better advantage themselves. The growers of blue peas were left alone, and the result is that they cannot get rid of their crop unless they are prepared to take 5s. per bushel for it. Only the other day I learned that blue peas were selling for 11s. per bushel in Sydney, and that shows the nice rise which would have been made by the man who offered 5s. per bushel for them earlier in the season if he had been able to get them at that price.

We have been assured that the people of the Commonwealth are to have the advantage of first-class cargo and passenger ships run by the Commonwealth between the States of Australia and the Old Country. I wish to appeal to the Minister who will have charge of shipping to see that proper consideration is given to Hobart, which has the finest port, not only in Australia, but in any part of the world.

Mr. PIGOTT.—Except Sydney.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—I have no wish to deprecate any other port in Australia, but at Hobart we have no channel, and without dredging there is a depth of 64 feet of water at low tide, and of 30 feet right up to the wharfs in the city. Great ships like the *Ceramic* may lie alongside the wharfs there. I can tell honorable members that when the *Ceramic* left the pier at Hobart she left without a tug, and was steaming out in the stream twenty minutes after her hawser was cast off. I do not wish to deprecate any other port in Australia, but, in Sydney, I have seen two tugs pulling a large steamer away from a wharf. I appeal to the Minister in charge of shipping to let us know early



the routes which the Commonwealth steamships are going to take. I believe that the whole of the trade from north, south, east, and west of Tasmania will be concentrated at Hobart, and could be carried by those ships to the Old Country, where we have been selling our produce so well.

There is another matter to which I should like to refer. Every one must admit that the Postmaster-General (Mr. Webster) has had a most trying time, and a very difficult task, and has done good work, but I question whether he has not been, to some extent, carried away by his interest in a saving policy. The Post and Telegraph Department should pay its employees well, and particularly the telegraph operators and the girls of the telephone exchange, who follow such a trying and nerve-racking occupation. It should also be economically managed, and if it pays its way that should be sufficient, and not a cent should go into the Consolidated Revenue of the country as the result of its operations. Revenue can only be earned from the Post Office by taxing the most useful body of our people, the citizens who use the post and telegraph services. I want the Postmaster-General to help in the work of repatriation by extending our telephone system as it has been extended in Norway.

Mr. WEBSTER.—We have a Repatriation Department.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—The Postmaster-General can help the Department considerably by extending the telephone system into the country, as has been done in Norway and Sweden. In those countries nearly every farmer's house is connected with a telephone exchange. I hope the day is not far distant when we shall be able to say the same of Australia. Copper is cheap to-day, and I should like to know what the Postmaster-General has done in the way of purchasing that essential commodity. There are opportunities all over Australia for the extension of the telephone system. We have excellent engineers in the Post and Telegraph Department, and as a result we have a very fine system. There is no cheeseparing in construction, but our system might be very greatly extended so that every

farmer might be brought into touch with the market, instead of as at present, having to lose a day to find out what market prices are ruling.

Mr. WEBSTER.—No country in the world with the same population gives such facilities as are given in Australia.

Mr. LAIRD SMITH.—That may be so.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [8.23].—There are one or two matters I should like to refer to. I should not deal with the Navigation Act if it had not been mentioned by the other honorable members. The history of the Act is well known, at least to some members of this Parliament. It was first introduced in the Senate in 1903 by the honorable member for Koo-yong (Sir Robert Best).

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I introduced it three times.

Mr. TUDOR.—That was before the honorable gentleman left that exclusive Chamber to come to us. The Act was passed in 1912. The British Crown reserves the right to have all Navigation Acts of the Dominions sent to the Old Country for approval. They cannot be assented to by the representatives of the Crown in any of the Dominions.

Mr. RILEY.—Was not the Act passed in 1914?

Mr. TUDOR.—No; it was passed in 1912, and at that time was probably the most advanced Navigation Act in the world.

Mr. YATES.—And our seamen have been denied its benefits until now.

Mr. TUDOR.—While the matter of giving the Royal Assent to the Act was under consideration in England there occurred the unfortunate accident to the *Titanic* in the Atlantic, and in consequence of the sinking of that vessel a Commission representing all nations concerned in navigation laws was appointed to consider the question. The Commission reported in 1914, before war was declared, and all European nations agreed to pass a similar Act. The British Parliament passed the Act recommended by the Commission a few days before the war broke out. Because of the difficulties connected with shipping at that time, the

British Government requested the Australian Government not to put our Act into operation. That is why it was not proclaimed long ago. I need make no excuses in connexion with the matter, because I have been out of the Customs Department for three years. The Act now requires amendment to bring it into line with the decisions of the Navigation Conference which sat as a result of the accident to the *Titanic*.

Mr. HIGGS.—Is it not nearly time that we had self-determination?

Mr. TUDOR.—I quite agree with the honorable member, but I wish to point out that if the Navigation Act is now proclaimed, whilst we shall have control of Inter-State shipping, we shall not be able to control Intra-State shipping. In Queensland and in New South Wales there is a good deal of Intra-State shipping, and that will remain under the provisions of the British Merchant Shipping Act. The honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Wallace) knows better probably than any other member of this House, with the exception of the honorable member for Parkes (Mr. Bruce Smith), that the worst conditions which our seamen have to put up with are found on vessels trading within the borders of a State, and not upon Inter-State vessels. Any one who knows what the work of seamen, and especially of firemen, is will agree that they are entitled to the best conditions of employment and to a high rate of wages. With respect to the present trouble in the shipping industry, I took the representatives of the seamen—Mr. Walsh and Mr. O'Neil—to the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) ten days before the trouble actually occurred, with the idea of settling the difficulty before it reached the stage which it has reached to-day. I say that if the putting of the Navigation Act into operation will facilitate the settlement of the present dispute, the Government should proclaim the Act in operation. Every effort should be made to put an end to the difficulty.

The honorable member for Denison (Mr. Laird Smith) made some reference to light dues, but without looking up the matter I am unable to say how they stand

now. I should like to make some reference to the question I asked yesterday concerning the awful sentences, in my opinion, which were passed on certain men of H.M.A.S. *Australia*. It was my privilege to send to the Acting Prime Minister a resolution arrived at a month or six weeks ago by the members of the party on this side—that, in view of the early termination of the war period and the celebration of Peace an amnesty should be declared in respect of all political prisoners. That has always hitherto been done. We all desire that our Australian Navy shall be popular with Australians, but the treatment of the men to whom I have referred is not going to make it popular. There may have been a ringleader amongst them, and every one knows that what most frequently gets youths into trouble—and these men are hardly more than youths—is their desire to be loyal to their pals. Some of the men on the *Australia* got into trouble, and they are going to be dismissed the Service. I do not suppose the Naval authorities will try to hang these men or to take from them the awards they have received for gallantry, but they have sentenced them to long terms of imprisonment.

The day after the *Australia* arrived at Port Melbourne I was waited upon by a lady who said to me, "My boy is on the *Australia* now in port. He has been away from home for four years and nine months. His father enlisted, and was killed on Gallipoli a fortnight after the landing. His only brother volunteered as a munition worker, and has not yet returned. I went down to the vessel, and was told that, because of some minor offence, my boy would not be allowed to go ashore, but that I could see him on board as often as I pleased." She urged that her boy should be allowed to visit his home. The offence which he had committed could not have been very serious, otherwise his mother would not have been permitted to see him even on board ship. I invite honorable members to consider the circumstances under which that mother was allowed to converse with her boy. When I visited the *Australia* while she was at Port Melbourne, there



were thousands on board. Many of the schools gave their scholars a half-holiday in order that they might visit the vessel; and on the day that I boarded her there were dozens of lads racing up and down the awning stretched over the main deck. I made an appeal that the boy should be allowed to go home, but was told that in the interests of discipline it could not be permitted. What a fine recruiting agent for the Navy that lad will be when, later on, he stands amongst his pals! Clubs for returned soldiers and sailors are being established all over Australia, but our young men do not favour club life. We are an open-air people, and when this youth stands with his mates on a street corner, or at a football match, he will not be a very good recruiting agent for the Australian Navy. The iron will have entered his soul.

I have had an experience of a Military court martial. When the honorable member for Adelaide (Gunner Yates, as he then was) had to appear before a court martial at the St. Kilda-road barracks, I thought that, since he was a member of our party, I would attend the Court, and hear for myself what had to be said concerning him. I found two soldiers standing at the door of the room in which the court martial was being held, and knowing that it was declared to be an open court martial, I inquired from one of the men whether any one might enter. I was told that I could not go in. When I pointed out that several press men were in the room, I was asked to give my name. One of the men interposed with the remark, "It is Tudor," and after a whispered conversation they decided to allow me to enter. I stood there as dumb as the honorable member for Echuca (Mr. Palmer) is at the present moment, and listened to a recital of the awful offences which my honorable friend (Mr. Yates) was alleged to have committed. A man sitting at the table—I do not know whether he was a member of the court, or only what is known as the "waiting member"—spoke to a burly soldier, who then came up to me and told me to "get out," as no witnesses were allowed in court. I said, "I

*Mr. Tudor.*

am not a witness"; but the reply I received was, "If you do not want to cause trouble, you had better get out." One never knows what one of these military men will do if one treads on his corns, and I determined to leave. I had scarcely reached the gate, some 60 yards distant, when a soldier came running after me, and said, "There has been a mistake; you should not have been sent out." But I declined to go back.

Mr. YATES.—They had found out the honorable member's identity. Had he been an ordinary citizen, he would have been thrown out.

Mr. TUDOR.—No doubt. Notwithstanding that this was declared to be an open court martial, I was ordered out. An open court martial should be open to all citizens, and since half-a-dozen pressmen were present, it could not be said that I was ordered to leave because statements were likely to be made that should not go abroad. This sort of thing is an absolute absurdity. The incident serves to show what military men will do when they have the chance. There were only nineteen persons in the room including myself, so that it cannot be said that I was ordered to leave because of the influenza regulations in regard to more than twenty individuals meeting at any one place. The Military authorities simply said "Out"—just as in court, sometimes, a piece of Labour legislation is declared *ultra vires*, which simply means "out"—and out I had to go.

The *Somali*, by which the honorable member for Adelaide returned from the Front, occupied seven days on the voyage from Fremantle, so that the time limit fixed by the influenza regulations had expired.

Mr. YATES.—And the doctor admitted that she was a clean ship.

Mr. TUDOR.—That being so, the troops on board should have been allowed to leave for their homes upon her arrival at Adelaide. Take the case of the *Ceramic*, which arrived here a couple of months ago. She anchored off the Portsea Quarantine Station, and the soldiers were taken off and compelled to remain in quarantine for

nine days. Meantime the *Ceramic* went up to Brisbane, where, no doubt, she loaded or unloaded cargo, and where her crew must have mixed with the wharf labourers or others, and she arrived in Port Philip again on the very day that the troops were released from quarantine. When the men heard of this, they naturally wished to know why they were quarantined, while the steamship, with its crew, was allowed to go on? There is something rotten in the management of some of these departments.

I wish now to refer to the exhibition of the manufactures of returned soldiers, which is now in the Queen's Hall. Most of these returned soldiers are partly maimed, but the exhibition goes to show that they are able, nevertheless, to do good work. We are all pleased to know that this class of work is being carried out by returned soldiers in all the States. It is of the utmost importance that these men should be put in the way of making their own living. I am very much afraid that the paying out of sustenance money, without at the same time putting the men in the way of making their own living, may prove an injury to the men themselves.

Mr. FLEMING.—In many cases it will do so.

Mr. TUDOR.—I have discussed this matter privately with the honorable member, and I know that that is his view. I myself have put it to a meeting of returned soldiers. In my own electorate there are some 2,000 or 3,000 returned men, and at a meeting there recently, I put it to them that it surely was not their desire that a married man who was himself not eligible for service, but whose only son had gone to the Front, should be dismissed from a position worth less than £3 a week to him in order to make room for a returned man. They told me that it was not their desire, and I do not think that such a system would be in their own interests. We ought to stress the point that every returned soldier should be given an opportunity for vocational training. The exhibition in the Queen's Hall will be an eye-opener to the people. The work is certainly very creditable to the men, and, indeed, is worthy of the most expert tradesmen in Australia.

Mr. WALLACE (West Sydney) [8.42].

—I am glad that the honorable member for Nepean (Mr. Orchard) has referred to the case of the men on the *Australia*, who have been so brutally and savagely sentenced for a breach of discipline. It is apparently the opinion of honorable members opposite that the sentences, although harsh, are not altogether unmerited, because discipline must be maintained. As an ex-seaman, I think the men have been most unduly and harshly punished. The evidence clearly shows that all that happened was that a deputation of them waited on the Commanding Officer to lodge certain complaints. They also preferred what, to some, may appear to have been the somewhat unfeasible request that the ship should remain another day at Fremantle in order that they might entertain their friends. If Admiral Viscount Jellicoe or Commodore Dumaresq had desired to entertain friends at Fremantle on the following day or week, the ship would have remained there, and nothing would have been said of the matter. But because the men had the temerity, after conferring amongst themselves, to ask that the ship might remain there another day, they were court-martialled, and some of them sentenced to two years' imprisonment. What would the people of Australia say if a body of working men, waiting upon their employers to ask for a holiday, were marched off between a cordon of police and sentenced to two years' imprisonment?

Mr. ATKINSON.—Did not the men refuse to obey some order?

Mr. WALLACE.—The order was that they should return to their work. The same order might be given in a factory or in any branch of industry. The men refused to go back to their work, and were sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Mr. PAGE.—In 1891, men were sentenced to three years' imprisonment for refusing to go back to work.

Mr. WALLACE.—But we are not now living in the barbarous middle ages, when men were gibbeted and put into stocks. These men had had four years' service on the other side of the world. They had been serving in the North Sea and around Great Britain for the whole of



that time, during which they had had very little liberty. They came to Australia and were hospitably treated. It was their first taste of liberty for four years. Having tasted it, they, naturally, wanted more. Accordingly, they preferred a simple request that the sailing of the *Australia* should be delayed for a day. After all, the *Australia* is quite a useless thing now. She is of no more value than an old tin kettle. She carries no cargo and no passengers between ports. For all the harm or all the good that she is doing she might as well be lying in Fremantle Harbor to-day. So that the request preferred by these men might have been acceded to without any ill-results accruing from it.

MR. FINLAYSON.—But that might have interfered with the officers' programme.

MR. WALLACE.—Yes. They may have had some function arranged for them in one of the other ports with which delay in the departure of the vessel would have interfered. The Government should immediately take into consideration the severity of the punishment meted out to these men, and, in view of their good service overseas, should immediately release them. The only punishment which should be inflicted upon them is to discharge them from the Navy, and there would not be very much punishment in that, because every man who serves in our Navy will be only too pleased to obtain his discharge from it. Indeed, we shall experience the utmost difficulty in getting men for our Navy if this is the sort of treatment that is to be accorded them.

Very similar treatment is meted out to the men in our mercantile marine. Under the Navigation Act, the master of a ship has absolute power to fine a seaman £20 or £50. In fact, all the seaman's wages can be forfeited by a mandate from the master. I recollect what happened to the men employed on the *Paratta* whilst on a voyage from Sydney to Great Britain with cargo. During that voyage the economy party considered that work would be facilitated if the sailors undertook to discharge the ashes. As this work was no part of their

duty, they refused to undertake it. Thereupon the master charged them with refusing to obey his lawful commands. They were taken ashore, tried by a military officer, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Whilst in custody they were compelled to herd with coloured people, whose habits were not too clean, with the result that, when they were released, they found themselves infested with vermin of all descriptions. Those men had to pay 2s. per day for their passage back to Australia. That is the sort of treatment which is meted out to seamen all over the world. Their history teems with anomalies of this description. There is no class which has been so badly treated. Thank God they have an organization in Australia to-day which is powerful enough to defy the authorities. Of course, the question may be asked, "Why do they not submit their case to arbitration?" But, to my mind, the Arbitration Court receives more condemnation from honorable members on the other side of the chamber than it does from the party with which I am associated. The pastoralists condemn it, and I am in receipt of a circular from the Farmers Union of Tasmania asking for its abolition. The orchardists, too, say that if the Court awards the members of the Australian Workers Union what they are contending for, they will have to go out of business. Evidently, therefore, most of the opposition to this tribunal comes from the other side. Personally, I think that the Arbitration Court is a failure.

MR. ARCHIBALD.—What about a round-table conference?

MR. WALLACE.—That would suit me admirably. It is up to us to look at this matter seriously, and to consider how we can best combat the industrial discontent which is raging, not only in Australia, but all over the world. The Arbitration Court, as at present constituted, is ineffective, because, while it can award a basic wage to the employee, it has no power to fix the profits which an industry shall be allowed to extort from the consumer. Consequently, if the Court awarded seamen £16 per month, there

would be nothing to prevent the ship-owners from increasing freights to such an extent that the general public might be further harassed by increased prices of commodities.

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—Could not all these matters be settled by an industrial conference?

Mr. WALLACE.—We cannot rely too much on individuals. As one who believes in constitutional government, I say that we should shoulder these responsibilities ourselves. It is up to us to make the Arbitration Court conform to our modern ideas. It needs to be remodelled. To my mind, all industries should be organized upon industrial lines. For example, the whole of the unions engaged in the transport industry should be organized into one union, and a Judge sitting in the Arbitration Court should be the controller of that industry. He should fix the prices to be charged by the dispenser of any commodity, the profits to be made and the wages to be paid.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Would the honorable member allow one man to do that?

Mr. WALLACE.—One man could do it for one industry. But it is too much to expect any one man to organize the whole of the industries of a country.

Mr. PALMER.—What if a man would not accept the wages that he was awarded?

Mr. WALLACE.—The same thing would happen as is happening to-day. Men are prepared to work so long as the remuneration they receive will provide them with the essentials of a good living. In New South Wales, a minimum wage of £3 per week has been fixed. I suppose that 60 per cent. of the workers there are receiving 10s. per week in excess of that wage. But when one takes into consideration the high cost of commodities and the rents charged for houses, he will see that such a wage is not sufficient for a man to live upon if he is to make any provision against sickness and old age. So it is necessary that we should arrive at a basic wage which will enable a man to live in comfort. We can, if necessary, control industry to the extent of making the men who are managing industries to-day for their own personal aggrandise-

ment manage them for the State, and we can provide that the surplus profits shall be paid into the Consolidated Revenue for the benefit of the entire community. In that way we could make provision for the payment of adequate old-age pensions—not 12s. 6d. per week, but £3 or £4 per week. We could give a man the same money as he had been earning.

Mr. JOWETT.—Is the honorable member sure there would be a surplus?

Mr. WALLACE.—Yes; it necessarily follows that there would be.

Mr. JOWETT.—I think there would be a loss.

Mr. WALLACE.—What does it matter, anyhow? All that we ask is that we should get the full benefit of what we earn. I consider that every man and woman has a right to the best that the world can afford to give them. I see no reason why one man should have £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 whilst another has not 4d. There is no reason for this inequality of distribution. What is wanted to-day is not so much organization in respect of production, but organization in respect of distribution. It is a function of government to see that that distribution is equitably carried out. It was done in Great Britain during the war. There it was found to be absolutely essential for the Government to take over every industry. The managing staffs of industries were quite prepared to come to the assistance of the authorities by devoting their intelligence and ability to the organization of particular enterprises for the sake of carrying on the war, and protecting the Old Country from the menace which confronted it if the enemy should win.

Mr. FLEMING.—The honorable member does not wish the people of Australia to work as hard as the people of Great Britain had to do during the war?

Mr. WALLACE.—There is no longer any necessity for the people of Great Britain to work as hard as they did during the war. It was recognised that all this organization should be undertaken for the purpose of winning the war; and although the people had to work long hours, they received much better wages, and at least their living was assured to them. Statistics show that before the



war in Great Britain, there were 33,000,000 practically on the bread line, while 14,000,000 owned the whole of the wealth.

Mr. FLEMING.—No people could keep up the pace at which the people of Great Britain worked during the war.

Mr. WALLACE.—I have no desire to enter into that line of argument, but it must be admitted that there was superior organization in Great Britain during the war in the matter of the limited supply of foodstuffs available. There were 7,000,000 men organized as fighters; in an economic sense, they might as well have been on a holiday, so far were they from assisting in useful production; and there was another 14,000,000 engaged in the production of war material, who also, in the same sense, might as well have been on a holiday. Thus there were 21,000,000 people whom the rest of the people of Great Britain had to maintain. If that 21,000,000 had been engaged in useful production, there would have been no necessity for the others to work fourteen or fifteen hours a day.

From the press and other quarters there has been a great deal of condemnation of the attitude the seamen who are on strike are adopting towards the Arbitration Court. I express no opinion as to whether they are right or wrong in refusing to go to that Court; but I agree with them that it is not always the best tribunal for securing an alteration of working conditions. The proclaiming of the Navigation Act, faulty as it is, would materially assist them. If that Act had been in operation, no doubt a more conciliatory spirit would have been displayed by the seamen, and quite possibly they would have felt inclined to submit their case to a tribunal for a proper hearing. The honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) pointed out that during the last six months three colliers have been wrecked on our coast, with lamentable loss of life. This could have been avoided if the Navigation Act had been in force, because it provides that no vessels shall leave port in an unseaworthy condition. The s.s. *Tuggerah* left Port Kembla with coal simply tipped into the hatches and

loaded up about 9 feet above them. The weather was so bad that when the vessel was at sea the crew were set to work trimming the coal; and while they were engaged in this task, the steamer was continually taking in water. The men got one set of hatches on, but before they could get another set on, the *Tuggerah* lurched and over she went. She sank within five minutes; and not a soul would have been saved had it not been for the fact that the lifeboats, instead of hanging on the davits as usual, were lying on the deck, and floated off into the water. Those members of the crew who were lucky enough to be thrown into the sea when the ship lurched over, were able to scramble into the boats and save their lives. But that vessel should not have been allowed to leave port before being properly inspected. The Navigation Act provides that inspectors shall be appointed at different ports to see that vessels are properly equipped and thoroughly seaworthy before leaving. The honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Tudor) told us that the Navigation Act has been hung up since 1910, but the measure has been before this Parliament since 1904—fifteen years ago.

Mr. WEST.—It would not have been passed had not a Labour Government come into power in 1910.

Mr. WALLACE.—I would not say too much about that. The Act provides that every overseas vessel coming to Australia must conform to Australian conditions before engaging in our coastal trade—that is to say, carrying passengers and cargo between Australian ports. For example, the Peninsular and Oriental Company, which employs Lascars at 25 rupees a month, would have to pay its crew at the Australian rates; but the managing directors of that company are very big men on the other side of the world—the company's profits last year amounted to something like £1,500,000, and its shares are now worth £45. It has plenty of money to throw about, and has a very big political influence in Great Britain. It would not suit it to have to pay £13 or £14 per month to Lascar firemen. Lambert and Holt's Line, Crosbie and Company, and another line running to South Africa, all carry cargo between the different ports of Australia, and employ coolies; but if the Navigation Act were

in operation, they would be compelled to pay higher rates of wages. This is the influence operating against the proclamation of the Act. If we hope to be anything as a nation, we must build up a mercantile marine. As most of our produce is carried by water, we should do everything we possibly can for our maritime industry. New Zealand has a Navigation Act which has been in operation for many years past. It is much more up to date than ours, and places severer restrictions on foreign-going boats that trade between New Zealand ports; and if the Dominion can enforce its measure without international complications, I do not see why the Commonwealth cannot have its Act proclaimed without being afraid of them.

As for the conditions under which a seaman works, if he does not happen to be on board his vessel at the scheduled time, he is liable to a penalty of £20; and if he commits a breach of discipline while on board, he is under severer penalties than are imposed on the average worker ashore. If we must have discipline on vessels, and if we want the seamen to conform to the conditions imposed upon them, we should give them a little extra compensation for submitting themselves to them. The fact that for the last six weeks it has been impossible to get men to man our ships shows how necessary it is to have trained men upon them; but the accommodation provided for them is abominable. In the building of vessels, no attention is paid to it. The s.s. *Niagara*, one of the most modern ships trading to Australia, came out on her maiden voyage as a coal-burner, carrying a crew of 125, for which accommodation was provided; but when she was afterwards fitted as an oil-burner, and the crew was reduced to forty, instead of the accommodation being altered to suit the forty, it was cut down. Today that vessel, in the matter of accommodation for the crew, is no better than a steamer built ten or twelve years previously.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported.

Standing Orders suspended and resolution adopted.

Resolution of Committee of Ways and Means covering resolution of Supply reported and adopted.

### Ordered—

That Mr. Watt and Mr. Webster do prepare and bring in a Bill to carry out the foregoing resolution.

Bill presented by Mr. WATT, and read a first and second time.

### In Committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 (Issue and application of £4,337,335).

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [9.17].—Perhaps I did not follow the Treasurer yesterday when he was making his statement with regard to the motion that has just been carried. Did I understand him to say that this Bill dealt only with loan moneys that had been borrowed for carrying on the war?

Mr. WATT (Balaclava—Acting Prime Minister and Treasurer) [9.18].—In reply to the honorable member for Maribyrnong, I have to say that the figures I gave yesterday were in relation to loan finance, and covered only war loan money.

Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.

### Schedule.

Mr. FINLAYSON (Brisbane) [9.19].—I move—

That Item No. 1, Division 13, Department of the Prime Minister, "Salaries £2,000," be reduced by £1.

I desire to call attention to the attitude of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in Great Britain at the present time and recently in regard to certain matters. Under cover of this amendment, I want to know just what is the position concerning the representation of Australia on the other side of the world. The Prime Minister and his colleague, the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook) have now been absent from the Commonwealth for about fourteen months, and during that time we have been treated to some remarkable exhibitions that make us wonder whether Australia is being represented by one man, or by two men with different ideas. Right through, so far as we are able to trace events by the cabled reports and the press statements, there has been a conflict of opinion between the Prime Minister and Sir Joseph Cook; so much so that we had a report, which was not very seriously denied—indeed, the correspondence confirmed it—that the



two gentlemen were not on speaking terms with each other. I find, to my surprise, that, even in to-night's *Herald*, there is further evidence of a conflict between the two gentlemen. The Prime Minister, speaking recently, and referring to the League of Nations, pointed out that it would be of no use to Australia, as it would be too slow and too dilatory in coming to our aid, so we must rely upon the British Navy for our protection. Then the Minister for the Navy is reported in to-night's *Herald* as having said that he believes in the League of Nations, but that the sword must remain in the background.

In the statement presented by the Acting Prime Minister to the House yesterday, reference was made to the fact that the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Navy were expected to leave Great Britain this week. There was also reference to the matters which we shall have to deal with when they return to Australia. I have no particular desire to-night to go into details concerning these matters, because there will be abundant opportunity to deal with them at first hand. At present, there is no doubt that we are somewhat handicapped, but I was interested to notice that, at a meeting of the Ministerial party on Tuesday, as reported in the *Age* newspaper of the 25th inst, a motion moved by you, Mr. Chairman, and seconded by Senator Pratten, was carried unanimously, so it was reported.

MR. FENTON.—There must have been some mental reservations.

MR. FINLAYSON.—Yes; I am anxious to know what mental reservations there were in the minds of some of the gentlemen who supported the motion, which was as follows:—

That this meeting of Ministerial supporters, having heard the official statement of the Acting Prime Minister, and the action of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and Sir Joseph Cook, as Australian representatives at the War Conference, and during the Peace negotiations in Great Britain and France, expresses its entire approval and appreciation of the splendid work that they have done, and that their great efforts were put forward in the interests of Australia, hereby expresses its continued confidence in Mr. Hughes as our leader.

Evidently the Acting Prime Minister was more communicative to members of the Ministerial party than he has yet been to the House, because all the information we have received so far from him has been that vouchsafed to us through the press. If there is any information of the character indicated in the resolution submitted at the meeting of the Ministerial party, which called forth its unqualified admiration of the Prime Minister, the House is entitled to have it. Evidently he submitted some information, because it elicited the unanimous approval of the Ministerial party and led to the adoption of the motion referred to as a splendid testimonial to the Prime Minister, to whom it was to be cabled. I have no doubt that, after the severe criticism that he has received on the other side of the world, and the misrepresentation that he complains of, Mr. Hughes will be very glad to know that there is such a happy family in Australia. It will be a great satisfaction to him, no doubt, to know that.

SIR ROBERT BEST.—You do not seem pleased about the happy family.

MR. FINLAYSON.—I am not very much alarmed at the happiness of honorable members opposite. I wish them every success. Politics, as Senator Lynch once reminded us, makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—We do not throw bricks about like you do.

MR. FINLAYSON.—The Prime Minister throws enough bricks to satisfy honorable members opposite.

I want to refer to one or two matters which I think require some explanation. Yesterday I directed the attention of the Acting Prime Minister to the speeches that have been delivered by the Prime Minister in London in regard to fiscal matters, and I asked if those views were indorsed by the Government. In his reply the Acting Prime Minister informed the House that the Government took full responsibility for the Prime Minister's utterance in England in respect to all matters. That being so, I would like to know where we stand, and whether the Prime Minister's advice to the Imperial

Government concerning the fiscal policy, is to be indorsed by the people of this country. For instance, we find the Prime Minister saying this, as reported in the *Age* of 20th instant—

Are the Germans to be helped or permitted to resume trade with Great Britain, as they did before the war, sometimes under a transparent disguise? If so, Germany will creep back to her old position, and the war will have been fought in vain.

Unless a definite policy is adopted which will give British manufacturers preference in their home markets, and give the overseas Dominions' raw materials a larger market within the Empire, not only will Imperial trade suffer, but the Empire will tend to disintegrate. The Dominions are passionately attached to the Empire, and do not hold the view that "Empire" is another name for "British." The economic policy which does not recognise this will destroy the Empire. The alternative is a policy of "Britain and the Empire for the Germans," dictated by pacifists and defeatists, or by the interests of international finance. If this policy of negation is adopted, it will not matter much whether the Hohenzollerns or Ebert the saddler control the destinies of Germany.

That is a most significant utterance, coming as it does from the Prime Minister, because there are on record some remarks made by a gentleman in this country about the recent great world conflict being a sordid trade war. He was most severely castigated on that occasion by the Prime Minister, and was very insultingly criticised by many of the Prime Minister's supporters. Of course, Archbishop Mannix may have been unwise in making that statement when he did, but it is most illuminating now to learn that the Prime Minister himself admits that, unless we can secure the trade which Germany previously held, we shall have fought this war in vain. But this is not the Prime Minister's only, although it is his most recent, statement on the matter. I find that, in addressing the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1916, he said—

It is refreshing to turn from the sickening folly of these doctrinaires, visionaries, agents of Germany—call them what you will—to the robust truth of the German Emil Zimmerman. He shows that the short-sightedness of Britain was responsible for the rise of Germany; that the economic position arising from that policy was directly responsible for the war.

How strange, indeed, it is that the Prime Minister, who, with lurid rhetoric, tried to make the people in this country believe that we went into this war for just, high and honorable responsibilities, now admits that it was the economic situation that brought about this war, and that unless we can secure some of the economic results it will have been fought in vain. One wonders whether the people of this country have realized, as the Prime Minister seems to have realized, that, after all, in regard to this war, as in regard to most other wars, they have been fooled. It is a most lamentable position. But not only in regard to economics has the Prime Minister shown a remarkable change. I desire to protest against his attitude concerning fiscal and economical arrangements with the Mother Country. The Prime Minister has not in any way scrupled, I was going to say, to advise the Mother Country as to its policy, but he seems to have assumed the position of director-general of British trade. It is not a question of whether he is entitled to advise the people at Home, but there is no justification for his assumption of the rôle of dictator to them, practically telling them that the policy they must adopt is the policy that he suggests. Listen to two extracts from a book that I came across in the library last night.

Mr. JOWETT.—Who wrote the book?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I do not know, because there is no author's name attached, but it is published by Fisher, Unwin, and Company, and the title is *Mr. Hughes: A Study*. This is what he said in 1916. Listen to the dogmatic rhetoric of the man, and remember that he was a guest, as one of the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, at the invitation of the Imperial Government, to confer on matters of Imperial concerns. He proceeds to dictate to them and schoolmaster them on matters of internal domestic policy.

Mr. HIGGS.—And the British people were paying his expenses all the time.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—We are paying his expenses now. On page 71 we read—

You must create new industries; you must develop those you have already. A comprehensive scheme of organization must cover the



whole industrial field. You must summon science to your aid, walk with her daily, and let her guide your feet by her clear shining light. And you must use the land of Britain to grow more of the food that Britain consumes. . . .

We must produce more wealth. . . . If we fail, it is the end of all our greatness. . . . There is but one way by which we can be saved. Let us then, without delay, resolve to take it.

But so little did he gain from castigations which he received after such utterances—castigations well deserved because of his unnecessary and impudent interference in affairs he had not any authority to touch—that, in 1918, addressing the London Chamber of Commerce, on 27th June, he said—

There must be a policy declared, and some man must have charge of this policy to give effect to it. We can do nothing in the Dominions of a permanent and effective kind until you declare your policy. Upon your policy ours is to be established. If Imperialism is to be something more than an aim, we must have action and a definite declaration of what you intend to do—a step from which there cannot be, and will not be, any drawing back. The policy of England must be known; it should be declared from the housetops. Germany does not hesitate to do so. She has formulated her policy with Austria. Let us do the same.

I only desire to point out, in contrast, what Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister of Canada, said, and then I shall make the application. Sir Robert Borden said—

In giving effect to the resolution of last year, the British Government must necessarily take into account the like considerations. Canada has no desire or intention of interfering in any such question of domestic concern in the United Kingdom, or of offering advice thereon.

It has never yet been suggested in this Parliament, nor has any one ever dared to suggest at any time in Australia, that the internal fiscal policy of this country has to be determined by the fiscal policy of Great Britain. That is a position we could not tolerate for a moment. The Prime Minister has, to his credit, at times been very insistent on Australia's right to its own self-government. I know of no matter of so immediate and extraordinary importance to the people of Australia at this particular juncture

*Mr. Finlayson.*

as the free and absolute control of their fiscal policy; yet the Prime Minister has said to Great Britain, "Our policy is dependent on yours." Is that the reason why the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) indicates that we cannot determine our trade policy—that we cannot establish our relations with Canada or New Zealand, which were interrupted by the war—until we know what the Prime Minister has arranged with the Imperial Government?

Mr. WATT.—Who said that?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—You suggested that when I asked you a question this morning.

Mr. WATT.—I said that we shall know the reciprocity proposals when the Minister for Trade and Customs has produced his Tariff. That has nothing to do with the Tariff.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—What the Acting Prime Minister said to me this morning was—

The policy of the Government on Tariff matters will be considered in full consultation with all the members of the Cabinet.

Mr. WATT.—Hear, hear!

Mr. FINLAYSON.—From that I take it that the decision in regard to Tariff matters will not be determined until all the members of the Cabinet are in attendance.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member is not entitled to make that deduction. We have frequently consulted with the Prime Minister on various matters by cable.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The deduction I draw is quite a fair one. It ought to be declared in this House that our control of our fiscal arrangements cannot be determined or affected by what the Imperial Government may or may not do in the matter.

Mr. WATT.—Or any other Government.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am glad to have that assurance from the Acting Prime Minister; but that is certainly not the policy as declared by the Prime Minister.

Mr. WATT.—I do not make that deduction from the reported speech you have read. I do not know what speech you are quoting from.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am quoting from a speech by the Prime Minister to the London Chamber of Commerce in June last. The first speech I quoted from was one delivered to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1916. I pointed out that, so far from his having learned anything, or taken to heart any advice as to the unwisdom of interfering with British domestic affairs, the Prime Minister, when he returned to England last year, laid it down, on the 27th June, before the London Chamber of Commerce, that our policy in Australia was awaiting the decision of the Imperial Government—that our policy was to be based on theirs.

Mr. WATT.—I do not think that is a deduction you are entitled to make from the report you quoted.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I refer honorable members again to the words I quoted, and ask whether the deduction I make is not a fair and reasonable one. I think that the words are not capable of any double meaning.

Mr. WATT.—What was the Prime Minister talking about?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—About the fiscal policy, and the need for protection against German economic domination.

Mr. WATT.—Surely the Prime Minister may easily make that statement, and preserve the attitude of the honorable member for Brisbane. If the British family is to trade together by reciprocal arrangement, it cannot be one-sided. We must know what the Mother Country intends before the reciprocal arrangements of the Dominions can be drafted. But that does not determine the whole fiscal policy of this country.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Even the Acting Prime Minister admits there is a possibility that we may come to some sort of reciprocal arrangement with the Mother Country which must affect our own arrangements in fiscal matters.

Mr. WATT.—Just as the honorable member himself suggested we should do with Canada and New Zealand.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I suggested that that matter should be determined by arrangement in regard to reciprocity.

Mr. WATT.—Quite so.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—That does not in the least degree affect our control of our own fiscal policy.

Mr. WATT.—Of course, it does.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Our policy is not to be based on the policy of Canada, whereas the Prime Minister said that the Australian policy is to be based on the policy adopted by the British Government.

Mr. WATT.—It is like a question between a buyer and a seller; the buyer does not know whether he can do business until the seller mentions his terms, and reciprocity must be based on give and take, and a knowledge of each other's intentions.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The whole point of my argument is that the Prime Minister lays down the proposition that the British policy must be fixed before we can know what our own policy is to be; it is not a question of giving and taking, but a question of taking or leaving.

Mr. WATT.—That is a strained interpretation of the words you read.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I have raised the question because the position ought to be known. I am sure that on both sides of the House there is a desire to conserve and develop trade within the Empire, and we are prepared to give all sorts of kindly consideration to every preferential proposal from the Mother Country or from the other Dominions.

Mr. WATT.—Every reciprocal proposal.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—We are prepared to deal with them; but I think the last thing we are prepared to do is to enter on a system of bargaining with the Imperial Government in regard to preference to Australian goods and materials in consideration of some *quid pro quo* in regard to goods and materials that we require.

Mr. WATT.—I am just a bit afraid that the honorable member's antipathy to the Prime Minister has sprained his judgment.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am just afraid that the Acting Prime Minister is exaggerating something that is only in his own mind. My antipathy to the Prime



Minister is not at all a personal matter, and I have said so repeatedly. It is based on my antipathy to his policy; and surely I may be permitted to discuss the policy announced by the honorable gentleman without being charged with antipathy to him as an individual. In any case, the Prime Minister is a proper subject for criticism, and, if necessary, most severe criticism, by any honorable member.

Mr. WATT.—I think a preferable course is to discuss the utterances of a gentleman when he is present.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am not the only individual who criticises the Prime Minister.

Mr. WATT.—Hear, hear!

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The criticisms that are directed to the Prime Minister are not all personal.

Mr. WATT.—Some of them are.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The honorable gentleman may speak for himself.

Mr. WATT.—I know some of them are.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Some little time ago, when the armistice was signed, the Prime Minister of Australia, in Great Britain, placarded himself as being so thoroughly dissatisfied because the armistice had been signed without his having been consulted that he broke out into a most unfortunate castigation of the Imperial Government. As to this, I may quote from the *Argus*.

Mr. WISE.—It is something new to find the honorable member falling back on the *Argus* for support!

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The same matter appeared in every newspaper, and if the honorable member likes I can quote from the *Age* or the *Herald*. The Prime Minister is reported to have said, at a luncheon given by the Australian Agents-General—

Under President Wilson's Peace terms, Belgium and France get what they want, while Australia gets nothing for her sacrifices. No provision is made for her staggering burden of debt, which she has the right to ask from the aggressors. Australia will insist upon making what Tariff distinctions she thinks proper.

Mr. Hughes was then in a very critical frame of mind. He was evidently sulky, or very petulant, and when the Acting Prime Minister was interrogated by the

press, he said he could not imagine that Mr. Hughes would say a thing like that.

Mr. WATT.—No; not "like that." It was another part of that speech.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Where it was stated that Australia had not been consulted in regard to the signing of the armistice, and that Mr. Lloyd George had said Australia would be consulted.

Mr. WATT.—I do not think it was that point either, if the honorable member will refresh his memory.

Mr. HIGGS.—Ask the Acting Prime Minister what point it was.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I know that some time afterwards the Prime Minister considered that the Acting Prime Minister had not been quite fair to him.

Mr. WATT.—No; Mr. Keith Murdoch said so. There is a difference in that.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I have before me a report from a Brisbane newspaper, dated 30th January of this year.

Mr. WATT.—"Our Special Correspondent."

Mr. FINLAYSON.—It is by the United Cable Service, and it states—

Mr. Hughes was repeatedly cheered as he spoke of the national feelings.

"We have a right to govern ourselves in our own way," he said, "It may not be other people's ways, but it is our way. In this peace there must be written in indelible characters those terms for which we went to war—self-government, security, and liberty." (Cheers.)

Mr. Hughes ended with a slashing attack on his Australian critics, aimed at least in part at Mr. Watt, whose deprecatory remarks on Mr. Hughes' American interview had been widely published in the British press. He said, "I am much criticised by my fellow citizens in Australia, because we put Australia first, not subordinating her interests to any. (Cheers.) Australia's interests are first. (Cheers.) I am her representative, and nobody else. (Cheers.) When I return to Australia I shall not be slow in telling those who, behind my back, attack this doctrine, that they are grievously injuring Australia."

Mr. FENTON.—That is good.

Mr. WATT.—The Prime Minister was referring to you, and others like you.

Mr. FENTON.—He will teach you.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—That is aimed at Mr. Watt.

Mr. WATT.—That is wrong.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The extract continues—

Some seem to clutch only at the skirts of Empire, and crawl along the ground where the Empire walks. You—

That is, our soldiers, whom Mr. Hughes was addressing—

You, and not they, have put Australia in her proud place to-day, and we owe to you the present attention to Australia's needs.

Mr. HIGGS.—And the Acting Prime Minister has not been such a critic since that time.

Mr. WATT.—I would just say that that newspaper man is a liar, and I so cabled to Mr. Hughes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Atkinson).—Order! The honorable member's time has lapsed.

Mr. FENTON (Maribyrnong) [9.48]. The honorable member for Brisbane has been getting on so remarkably well that I do not think the Ministerial side are desirous of hearing him further. That holds good in regard to the Acting Prime Minister particularly. I will leave the Minister in the hands of the honorable member for Brisbane, who has dealt with him exceptionally well to-night. But, as we are dealing with the Department of the Acting Prime Minister—

Mr. WATT.—We are not. We are dealing with one item now. Speak to the amendment.

Mr. FENTON.—Will you, Mr. Atkinson, kindly inform me exactly what the question is?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.—The amendment moved by the honorable member for Brisbane (Mr. Finlayson) was "That the item 'Salaries, £2,000,' be reduced by £1."

Mr. FENTON.—Then I shall leave the honorable member for Brisbane to proceed with his argument.

Mr. FINLAYSON (Brisbane) [9.50].—That brings me back to the resolution so cordially agreed to by the Ministerial party a couple of days ago, approving of the conduct of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and of the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook), in regard to matters which have been under discussion this evening.

Mr. BOYD.—When, and where, was this resolution carried?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The honorable member and his friends passed it unanimously on Tuesday.

Mr. BOYD.—Who told you that? Where did you get hold of that?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—It appeared in the papers.

Mr. BOYD.—Surely you do not believe everything the papers tell you.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The newspapers stated that "Mr. Watt added that he was requested to cable the resolution to Mr. Hughes, and he would do so to-day." No doubt, Mr. Hughes is now in possession of that very flattering testimonial. That the people on the other side of the world are not quite so satisfied with Mr. Hughes' conduct as are his friends here, is evident from two or three brief statements which I propose to read—

Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth, who ought properly to be attending to its affairs at home, figures by invitation of the profiteering Tariffist party in Britain as its special spokesman. It is for the people of Australia to pronounce whether he is theirs, and whether they approve of his taking a vacation in Britain for the express purpose of playing firebrand for the profiteering interests—he, the nominal representative of Labour and head of a Labour Ministry.

Mr. WATT.—Who wrote that?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The writer of this book.

Mr. WATT.—What is his name?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I do not know.

Mr. WATT.—Baron Munchausen, junior, I suppose.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—If I find out, the Acting Prime Minister will be the first whom I shall tell. On page 34 of the book the writer states—

If a British politician were to go to Australia on a campaign of vilification against the majority of the Australian people on the score of the fiscal policy they had seen fit to adopt (to say nothing of their policy as to conscription), he would probably not be very politely received. It is, indeed, not unlikely that he would be urgently advised either to keep a civil tongue in his head or to return to the scene of his normal political activities. Mr. Hughes, however, has the comforting knowledge that the grossest scurrilities on his part towards the majority of the British people will have the congenial backing of a press of which scurrility is the habitual instrument.



Then, on page 38, he proceeds—

There is nothing for it, then, but to hold Mr. Hughes and his doctrines up to the light of day. He has made unwarranted use of his privileged position to cast infamous aspersions on a mass of British electors considerably more numerous than the entire population of Australia; and he has followed up this attack with a mere mass of incoherent rhetoric that, on analysis, yields neither information nor argument. The production of such rhetoric, and not any process of rational persuasion, is the special function of Mr. Hughes. Let that suffice.

Mr. WATT.—Will the honorable member show me that book?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Certainly. It was taken from the Library.

Mr. FENTON.—The honorable member for Brisbane says he does not know who is the writer of the book. I think it is Mr. Hughes' publicity secretary, acting under instructions.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I hand the book over to the Acting Prime Minister.

Mr. WATT.—I note that there is no author's name.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I said so. The Acting Prime Minister should castigate the Library Committee for having approved of a book going upon the shelves of the Parliamentary Library without an author's name. We are told now that the Prime Minister and his colleague are about to sail, and that they will soon be back in Australia, and that, with their return, we shall enter upon the consideration of some most important matters. I propose to reserve my criticisms of Mr. Hughes' conduct in regard to the League of Nations and the Pacific Islands until he is present; and I trust there will be abundant opportunity given honorable members for the expression of their opinions frankly and freely. These matters are so important to the future welfare of Australia that we cannot but discuss them with our eye to the future. We must look upon these subjects from the broad, national stand-point, and think, not only of ourselves, but of the generations to come after us, that we may secure them, as far as possible, in their heritage here. The unfortunate position in which we are placed to-day is that Mr. Hughes is saying things on the other side of the

world which must be embarrassing both to the Imperial Government and to his friends here. Although the Acting Prime Minister admits—and, of course, he cannot do otherwise, in his efforts to be loyal to his absent chief—that the Government accept full responsibility for the Prime Minister's remarks, we shall have to adjust ourselves to the changing attitude adopted by Mr. Hughes in regard to these matters. I again protest against the absence of the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Navy for such a long period. There is no reason why they should have been so long away. There was a suggestion that Mr. Hughes desired to wait in order to sign the Peace Treaty on behalf of Australia; and it was said, further, that Sir Joseph Cook was determined to wait until Mr. Hughes came home.

Mr. WATT.—None of the Dominions representatives has left Europe while the Peace Conference deliberations have proceeded. The delegations are all still there.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—It was much easier for the representatives of some of the Dominions to be present in England and France the whole time than for the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

Mr. WATT.—Why so?

Mr. SPENCE.—There is a good man acting here in his stead, anyhow.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Government stated that one of the reasons why Parliament had not been called together earlier during the past six months was the protracted deliberations of the Peace Conference; and it was considered inadvisable to summon Parliament together for the discussion of public business. There was so much work awaiting honorable members in this Parliament—work of a domestic character which could have been in no wise affected by the deliberations of the Peace Conference—that the suggestion that the Conference was the reason for not calling Parliament together—

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member has shifted his ground. He was arguing that the Prime Minister should have been in Australia, and this would have meant—as he puts it—the non-representation of Australia at this critical hour in Paris.

Surely the honorable member does not advocate that!

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am not shifting my ground. While I am satisfied that the Prime Minister was properly in England, I hold that there was no reason for two Ministers to be there all the time; and I protest again that for two Ministers to have gone away from the one party in Australia, and to have pretended that they represented the Australian people at the Peace Conference, was a travesty on justice, and neither fair nor honest.

Mr. WATT.—New Zealand had two Ministers there, and Canada five. And, if what the honorable member says is true, the duty of the head of the Commonwealth Government was to be at the Peace Conference.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I quite admit that.

Mr. WATT.—Then what is the good of talking? Your quarrel is really with Sir Joseph Cook; yet you are quarrelling with the Prime Minister. Your complaint concerns the absence of the Minister for the Navy, and not of the Prime Minister, when it is all boiled down.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I say that there is no justification for the continued absence of the two Ministers.

Mr. WATT.—Will it satisfy the honorable member if Sir Joseph Cook is censured—formally admonished—when he returns?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Government were not only satisfied, evidently, that Australia should have but one kind of representation at the Peace Conference, but the unfortunate fact regarding the Conference right through has been that only one class of people in the world has been represented there. Folk may talk as they like about this being a people's peace. It is not a people's peace, and it will not be ratified by the peoples of the world, although it may be ratified by their Parliaments. I protest once more against two Ministers holding but one point of view pretending to represent Australia at the Peace Conference, when nearly half of the people of the Commonwealth hold political views differing from theirs.

Mr. WATT.—If your party had accepted the invitation to join in forming a national Government, Mr. Tudor would have been there, I suppose.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I am glad the honorable member puts it as a supposition, because I had not the slightest belief that anything of that kind would have happened. We on this side ought to have been invited to send a representative to the Peace Conference, either in addition to the two who went or as an alternative to one of them. Unfortunately, the Ministry, not satisfied with having two Ministers there, decided to send a third for some other duty. The Minister for Defence is absent from Australia, although he is the head of the biggest spending department in the Commonwealth, a position that it has always been conceded should, at the earliest possible moment, be removed from the Senate to this Chamber. We have items to discuss on the Defence Estimates which demand the presence of the Minister for Defence in this Chamber, and yet when the Government had the opportunity, in the absence of the Minister, to appoint in this Chamber an Acting Minister for Defence, with the full authority of his absent chief, instead of giving the portfolio to the honorable member for Gippsland (Mr. Wise), who was Assistant Minister, and a member of this House they gave it to a Minister of another place.

Mr. WATT.—Your own Government put the Defence portfolio during the war in the Senate.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—That is so: but when the war broke out the Minister for Defence was Senator Millen, and when the Labour party assumed office in 1914, Senator Pearce was appointed to succeed him. When Sir Joseph Cook was Leader of the Opposition he protested against the Defence portfolio being in the Senate, and members of the Labour party, whether on the right or the left of the Speaker, have also consistently protested against it. I am sure the members of this Chamber would have appreciated the control of the Defence Department being given to the honorable member for Gippsland (Mr. Wise) instead of to Senator Russell, for the special reason that we want to deal with Defence matters in this Chamber.



Evidently Ministers and their party were quite satisfied with all the statements that the Acting Prime Minister was able to make to them in their party meeting on Tuesday. After passing the most enthusiastic resolution regarding Mr. Hughes and Sir Joseph Cook, they passed another which members opposite will hear more about as the criticism of the present Administration proceeds. It was this:—

That this party desires to express its hearty approval of the admirable manner in which the Acting Prime Minister and his colleagues have administered the affairs of Australia during the absence of the Prime Minister, and approves of the policy for the coming session so ably and clearly set out by the Acting Prime Minister.

We have all on both sides of the House appreciated to the full the difficult task that the Acting Prime Minister has had to face. He has carried during the past twelve months a load rather beyond what the average man could bear, and we have all felt sympathy with him, especially when we learnt of his unfortunate illnesses. I hope that the relief from the strain that is probable in the near future will be to his advantage.

Mr. HIGGS.—Only he can tell of the strain of those cables from William.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—He has no doubt had to carry not only a heavy and difficult load, but a load that at times must have been extraordinarily irksome, because he had to enforce certain laws and put into operation certain machinery for which he was not primarily responsible, and which he must have known were detrimental to the best interests of Australia. The declaration of his party that they approve of the admirable manner in which the Government has been carried on brings us to what is admitted to-day to be one of the most critical positions that Australia has ever faced. The party declare that they are satisfied with the position that the Government has brought this country into. I wish them joy of their satisfaction. If they are satisfied with the "admirable" manner in which thousands of the people of this city and of the rest of Australia are suffering while facing want and privation, then the people outside are not satisfied, because it is anything but satisfactory to them.

The party also expressed their approval of the policy for the coming session propounded by the Acting Prime Minister. That is the policy that he propounded here yesterday, and which says to the people of this country, "We defy you; we challenge you; we will offer no concessions." Until to-day, when the Acting Prime Minister announced that he had agreed to give £500 towards the relief of distress, it was a case of "You can starve so far as we are concerned; we are going to fight you."

Mr. BOYD.—It is your own people that are making them starve. Why talk such rubbish?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The position became so acute in Queensland that appeals were made by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government to allow them to run the ships on the Queensland coast so that the food supplies of the people would not be held up.

Mr. WATT.—Yes, by conceding the demands of the seamen. We could do that to-morrow.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Government's own supporter, the honorable member for Herbert (Mr. Bamford), has appealed to them repeatedly on behalf of some of the ports in his constituency. The Queensland Government have appealed to them, and given them every guarantee that they can find crews for the ships, and get them loaded and discharged.

Mr. WATT.—By conceding the demands of the seamen.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Yes, and the Commonwealth Government preferred rather to see the people in the North Queensland ports go short of food than to give way to the seamen, when, after all, what the seamen asked for was a very small and modest consideration.

Mr. BOYD.—Why should the Government give way to men who break the laws?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The men have not broken the law.

Mr. BOYD.—They have broken the Arbitration Act.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Who have been the foes of arbitration in this country up to now? The Arbitration Court was established to try by conciliatory means to

prevent and settle industrial disputes. The employees have been continually thwarted and obstructed in their efforts to get to the Court, and Mr. Justice Higgins stated that the approach to the Court was so surrounded by a Serbonian bog of legal technicalities that it was difficult for any organization to get an award there. Those who have tried it have found not only that the employers have obstructed, hindered, and opposed them, but that the expense and delay have been so exasperating that it is no wonder the unionists of Australia are beginning to think that arbitration is of no use to them. I think they are wrong.

Mr. WATT.—There was nothing of that kind in this case. Before the strike took place I told the seamen that I would throw open the doors of the Arbitration Court by every power the Government had; and when, in defiance of that, they struck, I immediately instructed the Controller to apply for a conference. That all took place in forty-eight hours.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—We are all well aware of the efforts made by the Government, but the men are being castigated and misrepresented to-day because it is said they refused to go to the Court, and turned down arbitration.

Mr. WATT.—I did not say that. I said they declined the mediation of the Court when they were brought there.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—They refused to accept the mediation of the Court.

Mr. FENTON.—Would it be possible to settle this affair if the Government did not intervene?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I believe, if it had not been for a question of Government policy, the matter would have been settled without any difficulty, and it is the Government policy that I want to criticise. Their policy towards the seamen and other workers who are now out is simply this—"You have either to accept our terms or you can stay out, and we challenge you to battle."

Mr. WATT.—No; I said that if the seamen went to the Court, the Government would observe any award the Court might make.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—The Government could take up no other attitude.

Mr. WATT.—Precisely. Then what are you talking about?

Mr. FINLAYSON.—When the Queensland Government, in the interests of the food supply of the people in the north, wanted to man the ships and load them with food, the Commonwealth repeatedly refused its sanction.

Mr. WATT.—The Commonwealth Government said that none of the ships they had commandeered could give way to the seamen's log unless they all gave way, and that was a question for the Arbitration Court.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—And because it would have involved a recognition of some of the rights that the seamen might have had to the consideration of their demands, the Government refused to help the citizens of North Queensland.

Mr. WATT.—We wanted the question of those rights stated before the proper tribunal, and would accept its verdict.

Mr. FENTON.—Is it a fact that all those conditions are being allowed on the Commonwealth line of steamers?

Mr. WATT.—Not that I am aware of.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—Have we reached the position now that it is a case of who can last out the longest?

Mr. WATT.—No. If the honorable member knew all the facts—and I thought he did from the confident way he attacked the subject—he would know that there is another stage.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—We are all anxious that the industrial dislocation throughout Australia should be brought as speedily as possible to an end. We are passing through a very critical situation, but the Government party say they are quite satisfied with the policy propounded by the Acting Prime Minister for the coming session. What is that policy? I have asked honorable members on the other side whether they approved of the admirable manner in which the Government of the country has been conducted—

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member wants to know what is the policy of the



coming session. He will see that at the end of the statement, and not at the beginning of it.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I have asked honorable members on the Government side whether they approved of the admirable manner in which the Government have conducted the affairs of this country when their administration has brought about the position we see in Australia to-day. It is futile to say that the seamen are entirely responsible for the present position.

There is another circumstance I wish to refer to in this connexion. Ever since the Prime Minister established these "scab" recruiting agencies, or so-called "loyalists" bureaux," there has been industrial trouble in this country. This is another factor of the present position of affairs which goes to show that the Government, in the admirable manner so unanimously approved by honorable members on the other side, have sought not to bring about good government in Australia, but to stir up and provoke a most unfortunate and regrettable feeling of antagonism amongst the workers of this country.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member is very mixed about the motion to which he is referring. The approval was for the admirable administration, and the motion then proceeds to approve of the policy of the session.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I have been talking of the administration—the admirable administration that has brought us to the position in which we are to-day. This admirable manner of conducting the Government has put 20,000 people out of work, and has necessitated a grant of £500 in Australia for the relief of distress. That is, indeed, something to be proud of! What do the Government propose to do to remedy this state of affairs? They propose to amend the Arbitration Act. We do not yet know exactly what the proposal is, and we can only guess what it is from fugitive remarks and press comments, but we understand that the Government propose to amend the Act in the direction of enabling the antagonistic unions to register also in the Arbitration Court, and still further fight the trade unionists of the country. Does

the Acting Prime Minister expect that peace will result from that? Does he expect that that will bring about satisfactory government? What concerns me in the matter is that Australia, as a result of the war, is facing such a huge load of debt, and is under such a necessity for internal development that we need to unite all the forces of the community to secure the highest development, and to secure peace and harmony in this country. Yet the policy of the Government has been so directed in the past as to bring about chaos, confusion, disorder, and disintegration; and they now propose to continue that policy. What do they think will be the result of their proposed alteration of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act?

Mr. WATT.—Will the honorable member allow me to suggest that he is now addressing himself to a Supply Bill, and to an amendment which has been moved for a specific purpose. He has got on to the question of the Government policy, the consideration of which will follow this measure. If honorable members had put the Bill through, the honorable member would be nearly in order.

Mr. FINLAYSON.—I have moved a reduction of the vote for salaries of the Prime Minister's Department by £1.

Mr. WATT.—In order to attack the Prime Minister at Home; but the honorable member has become bushed out here, and is now on the question of the seamen's strike.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Atkinson).—The honorable member's time has expired.

Question—That the item be reduced by £1 (Mr. FINLAYSON's amendment)—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	27

Majority	..	..	13
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# AYES.

Brennan, Frank	Tudor, F. G.
Charlton, M.	Wallace, C.
Corboy, E. W.	West, J. E.
Fenton, J. E.	Yates, G. E.
Finlayson, W. F.	
Higgs, W. G.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mathews, J.	Page, J.
Riley, E.	Watkins, D.

## NOES.

Archibald, W. O.  
 Bayley, J. G.  
 Boyd, J. A.  
 Chanter, J. M.  
 Corser, E. B. C.  
 Fleming, W. M.  
 Foster, Richard  
 Gibson, W. G.  
 Glynn, P. McM.  
 Groom, L. E.  
 Jowett, E.  
 Leckie, J. W.  
 Livingston, J.  
 Lynch, J.

Mackay, G. H.  
 McWilliams, W. J.  
 Orchard, R. B.  
 Palmer, A. C.  
 Pigott, H. R. M.  
 Sinclair, H.  
 Smith, Laird  
 Spence, W. G.  
 Watt, W. A.  
 Webster, W.  
 Wise, G. H.

## Tellers:

Story, W. H.  
 Thomson, John

## PAIRS.

Anstey, F.  
 Blakeley, A.  
 Catts, J. H.  
 Mahony, W. G.  
 Nicholls, S. R.  
 McGrath, D. C.  
 McDonald, C.  
 Considine, M. P.  
 Maloney, Dr.

Abbott, Lt.-Colonel  
 Burchell, R. J.  
 Chapman, Austin  
 Greene, W. M.  
 Poynton, A.  
 Rodgers, A. S.  
 Smith, Bruce  
 Sampson, S.  
 Maxwell, G. A.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

**Mr. HIGGS** (Capricornia) [10.26].—I move—

That Item No. 2, Division 13, Department of the Prime Minister, "Contingencies, £3,000," be reduced by £1.

I submit this motion as a protest against the failure of the Government to deal adequately with the question of the manufacture of wool tops.

The Government, through the Central Wool Committee, acted most unfairly in giving secret concessions to two wool top manufacturing companies, without advertising to the general public that they had these concessions to give away. It will be remembered that Mr. F. W. Hughes, a member of the Central Wool Committee, acting in conjunction with Mr. J. C. Watson, was able to persuade that Committee to give a concession to the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company, which enabled that company to make very large profits.

The nominal capital of the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company was £100,000. The first issue of shares consisted of eight of £1 each, and the second issue of 99,992 shares. The number actually taken up, as at 22nd October, 1917, was, of the first issue, eight shares, and of the

second issue, 20,000 shares, or a total of 20,008 shares. There has been £1 per share called up in respect of the first issue of eight shares, and 5s. per share called up on the second issue of 20,000 shares. The directors of the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company are Mr. F. W. Hughes and Mr. J. C. Watson, and the acting secretary is Mr. G. F. Carson. Mr. Phillip Morton held one share, Mr. F. W. Hughes is the holder of 20,001, while Mr. F. Y. Wilson, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Hughes, Mr. Frank Herbert Hughes, Mr. J. C. Watson, and Mr. C. H. McLean each hold one share. This company, in which Mr. F. W. Hughes held 20,001 shares out of a total issue of 20,008, was enabled, with this paid-up capital of only £5,008, to secure contracts covering a period of six months, and amounting to £721,391 13s. 4d. We pointed out at the time that it would reap enormous profits. It was to receive for the wool tops manufactured by it 6s. per lb., whereas the company with which Mr. F. W. Hughes was associated before the war—Messrs. F. W. Hughes Ltd.—got for its wool tops only 2s. 6d. per lb.

As to the history of the company, I might remind honorable members that Messrs. F. W. Hughes Ltd. went into liquidation in order that it might break its contract with Japan.

**Mr. WATT**.—Do you know that that was the motive? It is so easy, under the cloak of privilege, to make such a statement.

**Mr. HIGGS**.—I am not abusing my privilege as a member of this House. It is generally understood that the reason for the company going into liquidation was that which I have stated. There was no other reason.

**Mr. BOYD**.—It might have gone into liquidation in order that a new company might be formed.

**Mr. HIGGS**.—It did, and the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company was formed. The shareholders in F. W. Hughes Ltd. were allowed either to take up shares in the new company or to accept debentures for their capital. The greater number of the shareholders were satisfied to accept debentures



carrying 7 per cent. interest, rather than become shareholders in the new company. They were, apparently, afraid, though, of course, without reason, that they would receive only 5 per cent. dividend. Evidently they did not care to take up shares in the new company, and it was left practically to Mr. F. W. Hughes, who took up 20,001 shares out of the total of 20,008 issued, and who paid up a capital of £5,001.

Mr. BOYD.—Does the honorable member say that only 5,008 shares were issued?

Mr. HIGGS.—No! £5,008 capital paid up. When the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company obtained these vast contracts extending over a period of six months, its paid-up capital consisted of only £5,008. I admit that a great deal of debenture capital was being used by the company; but under the agreement which the Government made with the company to share the profits, all this debenture capital had to be allowed for, and paid for, before the net profits could be ascertained and the Government could secure its share of them.

I have tried repeatedly to obtain from the Acting Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Central Wool Committee full information about the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company, but without avail. Sir John Higgins wrote me a letter in which he complained of my questions to the Acting Prime Minister. He resented them; and although he said, "We are willing to give the fullest information about the company," he failed to act up to his professions. I have made efforts to ascertain the business arrangements and the auditor's reports in regard to the company, but have been side-stepped by the Acting Prime Minister.

Mr. WATT.—Not at all. I have given the honorable member quite a lot of information. What I declined to do was to give information which I thought ought not, in the interest of any company, to be made public for the information of its opponents.

Mr. HIGGS.—That was the last reason given.

Mr. WATT.—It was the real reason.

Mr. HIGGS.—After endeavouring for many months to obtain the auditor's report on the transactions of the Government with this company, I was finally told that it would not be fair to give this information, since it would let the company's competitors know how it conducted its business.

Mr. BOYD.—What is the extent of the debenture capital?

Mr. HIGGS.—I have been unable to ascertain, because I have not been furnished with the auditor's report. The debenture capital might have been £150,000.

Mr. BOYD.—A £700,000 contract might not have been out of the way in the case of a company with a capital of £150,000.

Mr. WATT.—What does the honorable member mean by a £700,000 contract? The honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) is apparently referring to the business which the company did after it had obtained the right to export wool tops during war-time. It secured no contract from us.

Mr. HIGGS.—I can explain that. This company, with the influence of certain persons, was able to get contracts with Japan. The total contracts which it obtained during six months amounted, approximately, to £732,000. That, as the honorable member for Henty remarked just now, is not a large sum where there is a capital of £150,000 involved.

Mr. WATT.—There is much more capital involved than that.

Mr. HIGGS.—We do not get the auditor's report—

Mr. WATT.—I do not mind showing the honorable member anything in regard to the capitalization or the balance-sheet of the company; but what he asked me to do was to lay on the table the whole of the facts, which I do not think would be fair.

Mr. HIGGS.—There was a kind of partnership between the Government and this company—a partnership under which the Government were to receive a share of the profits.

Mr. WATT.—They were to get 33½ per cent. of the profits.

Mr. HIGGS.—What I asked was that the Government should lay on the table

of the House the auditor's report concerning the transactions of this company. Why was my request refused? What reason could there be for such a refusal, seeing that the Government were not allowing any other company to manufacture wool tops?

Mr. WATT.—Oh, yes, they were.

Mr. HIGGS.—No other company was given this concession.

Mr. WATT.—Whiddon Brothers were manufacturing at the same time.

Mr. HIGGS.—I mentioned that company.

Mr. WATT.—Since then there have been others. The Yarra Falls Company have come in.

Mr. HIGGS.—The Government may have acted in that way as the result of criticism.

Mr. WATT.—No. These companies said, "We now have our machinery. Will you give us the right to export wool tops?" and we said "Yes."

Mr. HIGGS.—I remember the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) refusing an application of that sort.

Mr. WATT.—Because those applying for it did not have the necessary machinery.

Mr. HIGGS.—I am not going to indulge in a dialogue such as the Acting Prime Minister had with the honorable member for Brisbane, so he must excuse me if I do not reply to his question. I have been refused the auditor's report, although I have asked for it. But if honorable members will turn to page 229 of the Treasurer's Statement of Receipt and Expenditure for the year ended 30th June, 1918, they will find the following report by the Auditor-General:—

MANUFACTURE OF WOOL TOPS—AUDIT OF  
ACCOUNTS.

On the 1st March, 1917, agreements were entered into between the Commonwealth Government and Whiddon Brothers Limited, Sydney, and the Colonel Combing Spinning and Weaving Company Limited, of Sydney, respectively, under which these companies were authorized to purchase wool for the purpose of manufacturing wool tops. It was provided that all books, vouchers, and documents in the possession or under the control of the respective companies relating to the purchase, manufacture, or sale of the sheepskins, wool, and wool tops referred to in the agreements should be produced to an auditor nominated by the Commonwealth Government for that purpose,

and it was also provided that any nomination or other communication by the Commonwealth Government to the companies should be deemed to be duly given if signed on behalf of the Commonwealth Government by the Chairman of the Central Wool Committee.

He then goes on to point out that the Treasurer, the late Lord Forrest—

submitted his opinion that these audits should be conducted under the control of the Auditor-General for the Commonwealth, and suggested that the auditor appointed by the Central Wool Committee should act under an appointment made by the Auditor-General—under the provisions of section 11 of the Audit Act—should the Auditor-General be willing to make such appointment. I was quite prepared to do this, but upon the matter coming under the notice of the Chairman of the Committee, he declared that such an arrangement would not be as satisfactory as the then procedure.

The Chairman of the company is Sir John M. Higgins. Everybody will admit that Sir John M. Higgins is a very able man. But he has been intrusted by the Prime Minister with a great deal too much power. He appears to be a sort of Australian Czar or autocrat, whose opinion possesses all the influence of a command. Because he is of opinion that the auditor appointed by the Government should not be on the staff of the Auditor-General, the latter is unable to attach that gentleman as one of his officers. The report of the Auditor-General proceeds—

Upon receiving the balance-sheets of the auditor appointed, the Treasurer asked for further information with respect thereto, but it was pointed out by the auditor that his reports were final, and that if further information with respect to accounts was required this should be obtained from the companies direct.

But the companies would refuse to give the Auditor-General this information, because they are acting under the jurisdiction of the auditor chosen by the chairman of the Committee. Then the statement by the Auditor-General continues—

Under the agreement made with Messrs. Whiddon Brothers, the certified balance-sheet prepared for the half-year ending 31st July, 1917, showed the moiety of the profit which accrued to the Commonwealth as £12,646 17s. 5d., and that for the period ending the 31st January, 1918, as £7,258 1s. 4d.—in addition to which a special licence-fee amounting to £16,286 19s. 2d. became payable by the company—or a total of £36,191 17s. 11d. That "licence-fee" appears to be a new term. I suppose that the Government



found that, owing to the criticism which had been offered, the term "partnership" was not satisfactory.

Mr. WATT.—There was no term "partnership" in the agreement.

Mr. HIGGS.—But that term was used by the Prime Minister himself when speaking. He declared that the Government had gone into partnership with the Wool Tops Company. Regarding the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company Limited, the Auditor-General states—

The certified balance-sheet of the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company Limited for the half-year ending the 31st August, 1917, showed the moiety of the net profit which accrued to the Commonwealth as £48,384 1s. 11d., and the special licence-fee payable by the company amounted to £129,016 7s. 6d.—or a total payable of £177,400 9s. 5d.—the payments thus due by the two companies amounting to £213,592 7s. 4d.

The honorable member for Henty (Mr. Boyd) asked me how much debenture capital was involved in this transaction; but, judging by the laughter and conversation on the Ministerial benches Ministerial supporters, having expressed their approval of the actions of the Government during the recess, do not desire to hear anything about this matter.

Mr. WATT.—They know that we have issued a writ against that company claiming £280,000, and they approve of our action.

Mr. HIGGS.—The fact that the Government expect to get out of the company a share amounting to £177,000 merely goes to show what a lot of money the company must have made on a paid-up capital of £5,008.

Mr. BOYD.—I think that the debenture capital is part of the capital of the company, just as is the £5,008 paid-up capital.

Mr. HIGGS.—The interest on debenture capital has to be reckoned before profits are taken. The agreement with the Government provides that all outgoings are to be considered before the net profit is taken. Thus, interest on borrowed capital had to be taken out of the gross profits, and the Government's share came out of the net profit. Seeing that that share was £177,000, the company must have made an immense profit.

Mr. WATT.—Speaking from memory, I think there is a much larger amount of debenture capital than the honorable member suggests.

Mr. HIGGS.—There may be; but the agreement entered into with the company was so elastic that it enabled it to spend all the money it possibly could in the way of repairs to machinery and interest on borrowed money before the Government were considered. That is why there is litigation to-day. The agreement was so loosely drawn that this clever Mr. F. W. Hughes has been able to keep the Government out of their money.

Mr. WATT.—I am trying to get it.

Mr. HIGGS.—But the Treasurer has been trying to get it for a long time. The Auditor-General says—

The Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company, however, disputed a payment of £88,412, and this is now the subject, it is understood, of litigation as between the Central Wool Committee and the company. The amounts actually paid by the companies total £125,179, and this amount remains in a special account entitled "The Wool-tops Manufacturers' Account" at the Commonwealth Bank, Sydney, and it is subject to certain conditions related in the agreements respecting war-time profits tax and State taxes. The position is a very unfortunate one.

Sir John M. Higgins is a czar, who is operating the wool-tops industry, the Central Wool Committee, and the metal industry. In these industries he seems to have more power than the Acting Prime Minister has.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member is wrong.

Mr. HIGGS.—The Acting Prime Minister objects to the term, "partnership"; but it is a partnership which entails certain responsibilities on the Government as employers. The employees of the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company are being ill-used. Mr. F. W. Hughes, in association with Mr. J. C. Watson, strange to say, is exploiting the miseries of the employees of the company. The works have been closed down. The honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) would support me if he were here.

Mr. WATT.—The honorable member for South Sydney did not support me

when I endeavoured to put the agreement on a proper basis. He said that the effect of my interference with the old agreement was to stop work. On the other hand, the honorable member is complaining about the old agreement. His utterance shows that if he were in my position he would have done what I attempted to do. He would have put the agreement on a proper business basis.

Mr. HIGGS.—The Acting Prime Minister has failed to do so.

Mr. WATT.—I got the agreement signed after elaborate conferences; but it was not abided by, and nothing could be done then but to push the company.

Mr. HIGGS.—Mr. F. W. Hughes is an extraordinarily clever business man. He appears to know all the tricks necessary to obtain political influence, and he is an adept at exploiting the miseries of his employees in order to bring influence to bear on the Government. From time to time he closes down his works, and then he gets the unfortunate people who are out of employment to approach members of Parliament and ask that the works may be set going again, and that the Acting Prime Minister should give the company certain concessions. Then, of course, the Acting Prime Minister says, "These people are out of work; we must get them to work," and he gives Mr. F. W. Hughes a concession.

Mr. WATT.—I have given him no concessions.

Mr. HIGGS.—He has been given concessions. He got a bounty from this Parliament on the understanding that he would employ a lot of skilled labour, but he installed automatic machinery and employed a number of girls. He failed to carry out his promise to Parliament. From time to time he has closed down his works, and Parliament has been approached and asked to furnish him with means to carry on in order that the unfortunate people in his employment may be given work. That has happened recently. The Government are now attacking the company because they want their money. What does Mr. Hughes do? He closes down the works—they have been shut down for weeks and months—and he has been trying to get certain senators to

arrange a sort of *modus vivendi* with the Government, by which the Administration will carry on the works, and probably withdraw the litigation. I do not know whether this is his object, but it is a fact that the unfortunate employees are not working. The Government know that they are partners with Mr. Hughes, and that they are in duty bound to look after the employees, out of whom they get this profit. If Ministers were carrying out their administration in "an admirable manner," as claimed by the National Caucus meeting held on Tuesday last, they would use a portion of the £213,000 for the purpose of paying a small bonus to these employees.

Mr. WATT.—We have not got the money yet.

Mr. HIGGS.—Why cannot the Government get it? What is the matter with the agreement that prevents them from getting it?

Mr. WATT.—That is a matter for the Courts to decide.

Mr. HIGGS.—Have Sir John M. Higgins and his advisers recommended the acceptance of an agreement so loosely drawn that the Government are unable to get their just dues from Mr. F. W. Hughes?

Mr. WATT.—I have seen wills contested though they have been drawn up by the most eminent legal men of the country. At any rate, the dispute has yet to be settled, and we cannot discuss it, seeing that the case is *sub judice*.

Mr. HIGGS.—These unfortunate people are out of employment. They have been exploited by Mr. F. W. Hughes, and his partners, the Government. If the Acting Prime Minister denies the application of that term, I refer him to a speech made by the Prime Minister (Mr. W. M. Hughes), about the time the agreement was initiated, when he referred to the fact that the company were going into this business of manufacturing wool tops, and said that the Government were to get a share of the profits. I raise this question in order to draw attention to the extraordinary position Sir John M. Higgins occupies. He is a very eminent and clever man, but he is responsible to no one but himself. In this Chamber we are responsible to our electors, who may



turn us out if they disagree with our actions.

Mr. WATT.—Sir John Higgins has given some very valuable assistance during the war, not only to this Government, but also to prior Governments.

Mr. HIGGS.—I agree; but does the valuable assistance he has rendered entitle him to occupy the position he does? He defies the representatives in this Chamber who ask for information, and he is able to so influence members of the Government that they will not take action to compel him to disclose it. I have moved my motion in order to protest against the conduct of the Government in allowing Sir John M. Higgins to "run the show."

Question—That the item be reduced by £1 (Mr. Higgs' amendment)—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes .. .. .	12
Noes .. .. .	27

Majority .. .. .	15
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#### AYES.

Charlton, M.	Tudor, F. G.
Corboy, E. W.	West, J. E.
Fenton, J. E.	Yates, G. E.
Finlayson, W. F.	
Higgs, W. G.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mathews, J.	Page, J.
Riley, E.	Watkins, D.

#### NOES.

Archibald, W. O.	Mackay, G. H.
Atkinson, L.	McWilliams, W. J.
Bayley, J. G.	Orchard, R. B.
Boyd, J. A.	Palmer, A. C.
Corser, E. B. C.	Pigott, H. R. M.
Fleming, W. M.	Sinclair, H.
Foster, Richard	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Spence, W. G.
Glynn, P. McM.	Watt, W. A.
Groom, L. E.	Webster, W.
Jowett, E.	Wise, G. H.
Lister, J. H.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Livingston, J.	Story, W. H.
Lynch, J.	Thomson, John

#### PAIRS.

Anstey, F.	Abbott, Lt.-Col.
Blakeley, A.	Burchell, R. J.
Catts, J. H.	Chapman, Austin.
Mahony, W. G.	Greene, W. M.
Nicholls, S. R.	Poynton, A.
McGrath, D. C.	Rodgers, A. S.
McDonald, C.	Smith, Bruce.
Considine, M. P.	Sampson, S.
Maloney, Dr.	Maxwell, G. A.
Wallace, C.	Kelly, W. H.
Brennan, F.	Fowler, J. M.

Question so resolved in the negative.  
Amendment negatived.

Mr. YATES (Adelaide) [11.3].—I desire to draw attention to a matter concerning the High Commissioner in London, but before doing so perhaps it will be as well if I make an explanation of a personal nature, so that any honorable members who have been in London recently, and are aware of what took place, may be under no misapprehension. Whilst I was in France some time after the "hop over" of the 8th August, and after we had been at the guns for some considerable time, we pulled out of Rosieres, and we had rather an exciting time, as we had to get out under open observation and were shelled very heavily in daylight, but luckily we had only one casualty. The point of my story is that when we pulled up for lunch, the paper in which our jam had been carried from South Australia was handed over to me, as quite naturally I was interested in Adelaide news. As luck would have it, that paper contained a full account of the official opening of Australia House in London. I read all that took place there, and turning to the page on which were given the names of those who were presented to the King, I noticed the names of Corporal Fleming, Lieutenant Burchell, and Mr. Anstey. I had no objection to that. What annoyed me was the fact that on the morning that we pulled out from Ignacourt on our way to Rosieres, I received an invitation from, I think, Lord Burnham, but of course I could not attend. I also received three other invitations, including one from the Speaker of the House of Commons, all of which I highly appreciated, as a recognition of my official position in this Parliament; but I got no invitation from the High Commissioner, the source from which I was entitled to expect one. Accordingly, I wrote and expressed myself in pretty clear terms to Mr. Fisher, because he did not know then that I was not in England, and, therefore, would not be able to accept an invitation. I felt that, as member for Adelaide, I was entitled to the same recognition that was accorded to other members who were holding up the London front. Without reflecting on anybody, I contend that I was as much entitled to invitations as were others who were holding



up the London front. It might be thought that I am challenging the High Commissioner's vote out of pique at my treatment, and I make this explanation to remove that impression. I challenge the vote because I would like to know what are the duties of the High Commissioner, and what is the use of his office. On my way home, I read the *Age* newspaper on this matter. Having referred to the various Ministers who are now at Home, it asked the same question. I admit that I am not aware what the High Commissioner's duties are, though I conceive that he acts diplomatically in regard to loans, the finances generally, and other Commonwealth business. When I was overseas, I saw that the Prime Minister had decided to stay in England for the express purpose of negotiating the sale of our wheat, wool, and metals, and to attend to demobilization, and with that in view, he wired to his constituents at Bendigo asking whether they were agreeable to his remaining. So far as I know, the honorable gentleman did not say that he had asked his colleagues whether he could be spared. In addition to him and the Minister for the Navy (Sir Joseph Cook), there is now the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) in London; and hence the press asks what the High Commissioner is there for. I think the expense of this office is rather extravagant, though I know it plays up to society. I do not wish to make a Bolshevik speech. The honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) shakes his head, but I know that if I, as a working man, went Home, and he were there at the same time, he would see much more of the Commissioner than myself. Australia is paying a most exorbitant price for a figure head, and this is not in accordance with the Democratic ideals of this country. All these expenses have to be met by the workers. It does not matter in which way we impose taxation, there is a process of filtration whereby it ultimately reaches the labourer, who cannot pass it on, and necessarily must pay. It is due to the Prime Minister to make a clear, plain statement of the functions and duties of the High Commissioner at Home. I do not say he does not fill an office necessary in some degree, but I think

he is simply a figure head for the social caste of Australia in Great Britain, and I think that when I express my opinion I am voicing the sentiments of those who sent me here. When Lord Jellicoe visited South Australia he attended a ball given by the Mayor of Adelaide, and I have to say that there were very few diggers there. I myself had not an invitation, because, perhaps, I do not come from the right political element. Every one was there who counted in society, and, above all, F. H. Snow, they tell me, was an invited guest. I do not cite this ball as an argument against the High Commissioner's office, but as a comparison and a contrast. Unless some justification can be given that will satisfy the working community, I think that the Chief Officer of the High Commissioner's office could do the work, as, in my opinion, he really does, while Mr. Fisher wears the rosettes.

Mr. WATT.—It was the representatives of the working community that appointed a High Commissioner.

Mr. YATES.—I admit that our party when in power did a lot of things which honorable members opposite say we did, and some of these things I should not have done myself. However, I commend the Labour Government for sending one of our own side Home, because it is so seldom that we have an opportunity to put any of our people into positions of the kind. The time may come again when we shall have to fill the position if it continues to exist, but that does not interfere with my argument that the position is not justified. As to the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Navy representing us at the Peace Conference, we were not over-represented by them if we had to be represented at all; and I hope their work will reflect credit on themselves, and be of benefit to Australia. It is not the time to argue about what they have done; but they have not done what I went to fight for. I went to get the blood of those who made the war, and to see that they were left to lament. However, none of the top-dogs have been killed up to now, though the Socialist leader, who stuck to his guns, went down, and is now kicking up the daisies. The whole question will have to be faced some time or other. TH



honorable member for Brisbane made out a good case; and whatever trouble does arise in Australia will come, not only from the industrial classes, but from the soldiers the promises to whom have not been honoured. But it will come without the bloodshed which has been witnessed in Russia, and we shall surely gain the beneficial results which those men fought for. Reverting to the High Commissioner and the "rosette" business—when we look at the whole of the cost set down it represents a tidy sum; and all for what purpose? If it were going to confer on Australia anything like an adequate return for the expenditure I would not criticise. But, on behalf of those who have to foot the bill, I call upon the Government to make clear exactly what the position is.

**Mr. WATT** (Balaclava—Acting Prime Minister) [11.17].—The Government are loath to control or limit discussion. I remind honorable members, however, that there will be an excellent opportunity following upon this debate, for a general discussion of the policy of the Government; I refer to the motion for the printing of the document containing the Ministerial proposals. If honorable members will assist the Government, we do not desire to avoid or abolish that debate. We want honorable members to have a reasonable chance to discuss the subjects therein referred to. But it should not be forgotten that, whatever Government may be in power, certain payments have to be met. There are no politics in a Supply Bill. If honorable members opposite were here on the Treas-

ury benches—which God forbid—the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) or some one of his colleagues would now be trying to achieve what I am endeavouring to do, namely, to get money for the Public Service.

**Mr. TUDOR.**—And honorable members opposite us, who are now dumb, would be kicking up the biggest row with respect to the actions of those in power.

**Mr. WATT.**—No, they would not be doing that; they would be contributing to the education of those in occupation of the Government benches, and, no doubt, would be doing so in that classical way that has distinguished them whenever they have chanced to be in opposition. There are certain payments due, whether we like it or not, next week; and I am quite willing to make this compact with honorable members, namely, that if before 3.30 p.m. to-morrow they will permit this Bill to go on to the Senate, so as to allow public credit to be met within the time requisite under the Audit Act, opportunity will be afforded for full discussion of Government business. I consent, therefore, now to the reporting of progress.

Progress reported.

## PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—  
Papua—Annual Report—For year 1917-18.

Ordered to be printed.

Sheepskins—British Imperial Government in accordance with Commonwealth Central Wool Committee for purchase of sheepskins, 1917-18.

Public Service Act—Promotion of F. W. Arnold, Postmaster-General's Department.

House adjourned at 11.20 p.m.



Speaker—The Honorable William Elliot Johnson.

Chairman of Committees—The Honorable John Moore Chanter.

- <sup>10</sup>Abbott, Lieut.-Colonel New England  
Percy Phipps, C.M.G. (N.S.W.)
- Anstey, Frank .. Bourke (V.)
- Archibald, Hon. William Hindmarsh (S.A.)  
Oliver
- <sup>4</sup>Atkinson, Llewelyn .. Wilmot (T.)
- <sup>4</sup>Bamford, Hon. Frederick Herbert (Q.)  
William
- Bayley, James Garfield .. Oxley (Q.)
- Best, Hon. Sir Robert Kooyong (V.)  
Wallace, K.C.M.G.
- Blakeley, Arthur .. Darling (N.S.W.)
- <sup>3</sup>Boyd, Hon. James Arthur Henty (V.)
- Brennan, Frank .. Batman (V.)
- <sup>9</sup>Bruce, Stanley Melbourne Flinders (V.)
- Burchell, Reginald John Fremantle (W.A.)
- Catts, James Howard .. Cook (N.S.W.)
- Chanter, Hon. John Moore Riverina (N.S.W.)
- Chapman, Hon. Austin .. Eden-Monaro  
(N.S.W.)
- <sup>4</sup>Charlton, Matthew .. Hunter (N.S.W.)
- Considine, Michael Patrick Barrier (N.S.W.)
- Cook, Right Hon. Sir Parramatta (N.S.W.)  
Joseph, P.C., G.C.M.G.
- <sup>13</sup>Corboy, Edwin Wilkie .. Swan (W.A.)
- <sup>8</sup>Corser, Edward Bernard Wide Bay (Q.)  
Cresset
- Falkiner, Franc Brereton Hume (N.S.W.)  
Sadleir
- Fenton, James Edward .. Maribyrnong (V.)
- Finlayson, William Fyfe .. Brisbane (Q.)
- Fleming, William Mont-Robertson (N.S.W.)  
gomerie
- <sup>11</sup>Forrest, Right Hon. Lord Swan (W.A.)  
P.C., G.C.M.G.
- Foster, Hon. Richard Wakefield (S.A.)  
Witty
- Fowler, Hon. James Perth (W.A.)  
Mackinnon
- <sup>14</sup>Gerrard, William Gerrard Corangamite (V.)
- Glynn, Hon. Patrick Angus (S.A.)  
McMahon, K.C.
- Greene, Hon. Walter Massy Richmond (N.S.W.)
- Gregory, Hon. Henry .. Dampier (W.A.)
- Groom, Hon. Littleton Darling Downs (Q.)  
Ernest
- Heitmann, Edward Ernest Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
- Higgs, Hon. William Guy Capricornia (Q.)
- <sup>1</sup>Howroyd, Charles Richard Darwin (T.)
- Hughes, Right Hon. Bendigo (V.)  
William Morris, P.C.
- <sup>7</sup>Irvine, Hon. Sir William Flinders (V.)  
Hill, K.C.M.G., K.C.
- Jensen, Hon. Jens August Bass (T.)

- Johnson, Hon. William Lang (N.S.W.)  
Elliot
- <sup>6</sup>Jowett, Edmund .. Grampians (V.)
- Kelly, Hon. William Henry Wentworth (N.S.W.)
- Lamond, Hector .. Illawarra (N.S.W.)
- Leckie, John William .. Indi (V.)
- Lister, John Henry .. Corio (V.)
- Livingston, John .. Barker (S.A.)
- Lynch, John .. Werriwa (N.S.W.)
- Mackay, George Hugh .. Lilley (Q.)
- Mahony, William George Dalley (N.S.W.)
- Maloney, William .. Melbourne (V.)
- <sup>12</sup>Manifold, Hon. James Corangamite (V.)  
Chester
- Mathews, James .. Melbourne Ports (V.)
- Maxwell, George Arnot .. Fawkner (V.)
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- <sup>5</sup>McGrath, David Charles Ballaarat (V.)
- McWilliams, William Franklin (T.)  
James
- Nicholls, Samuel Robert .. Macquarie (N.S.W.)
- Orchard, Hon. Richard Nepean (N.S.W.)  
Beaumont
- Page, Hon. James .. Maranoa (Q.)
- Palmer, Albert Clayton .. Echuca (V.)
- Pigott, Henry Robert Calare (N.S.W.)  
Maguire
- Poynton, Hon. Alexander Grey (S.A.)
- Riley, Edward .. South Sydney  
(N.S.W.)
- Rodgers, Arthur Stanis Wannon (V.)  
laus
- Ryrie, General Granville North Sydney  
de Laune, C.B., C.M.G. (N.S.W.)
- <sup>5</sup>Salmon, Hon. Charles Grampians (V.)  
Carty
- Sampson, Sydney .. Wimmera (V.)
- Sinclair, Hugh .. Moreton (Q.)
- Smith, Hon. Bruce, K.C. Parkes (N.S.W.)
- Smith, Hon. William Denison (T.)  
Henry Laird
- <sup>2</sup>Spence, Hon. William Darwin (T.)  
Guthrie
- Story, William Harrison .. Boothby (S.A.)
- Thomson, John .. Cowper (N.S.W.)
- Tudor, Hon. Frank Yarra (V.)  
Gwynne
- Wallace, Cornelius .. West Sydney (N.S.W.)
- Watkins, Hon. David .. Newcastle (N.S.W.)
- Watt, Hon. William Balaclava (V.)  
Alexander
- Webster, Hon. William .. Gwydir (N.S.W.)
- West, John Edward .. East Sydney (N.S.W.)
- Wise, Hon. George Henry Gippsland (V.)
- Yates, George Edwin .. Adelaide (S.A.)

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